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[SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.]

LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAY WOMEN LOVE.

And trust me not at all—or all in all.

Nothing could ever make Lady Violet a really handsome woman, and perhaps this one fact contained a degree of bitterness for her ladyship few could guess or understand. Her vanity was excessive, her extravagance limitless. She was a cold and haughty woman, accustomed to rule, and averse to any violent forms of friendship and regard, as supposed to be slightly underbred and plebeian.

Those who accused her of pride never gave her credit for vehemence, and her worst enemies involuntarily respected her. She ruled the household with a rod of iron; and she took a great dislike to her younger sister, partly because she was prettier, sweeter, and more popular than herself. She had strictly punished her as a child, and still endeavoured to keep her in order as a young woman; a difficult task, even for a Lady Violet, who little suspected there was marvellous strength under her sister's gentleness.

"I intend to ride this morning," her ladyship was saying to her maid, when that functionary prepared her bath, "see that my habit is in order. I find after hard dancing nothing braces me up so much as saddle exercise."

"If I may be allowed to speak I should say we thought your ladyship quite the belle of the

room last night," the maid said, timidly, as if propitiating a goddess who might reward her offering with a slight. "I should say others thought so too. The Duchess de Vandemere, famous for her beauty at Brussels, looked nothing beside your ladyship under the waxen lights."

"My complexion is certainly dazzling at night, I believe," her ladyship assented, lazily; "pour a bottle of toilet vinegar into the bath. The duchess rouges, at least so they say."

"Very little doubt of that, my lady. She has just gone out with the Earl for a stroll before breakfast, and it is now past twelve o'clock."

Lady Violet draws a diamond-studded watch from her pillow.

"Yes; positively twelve. Have you seen Lady Constance yet?"

"Yes, my lady, but she is sleeping, and some say, begging your ladyship's pardon, that the young lady was seen coming in alone from the garden just before the party broke up for good."

"She went out for a mouthful of fresh air, I suppose," was the answer, delivered in her ladyship's coldly grand way. Nothing could equal the pitiless indifference of her tone. There seemed indeed something watchful and intent in the cool malignity with which she ever spoke of her sister as if some unnatural hatred were aroused at her name. Lady Violet was one of those women most to be dreaded when they appear least vindictive. "I remember," she continued, "Sir Hugh Allerton saying he had searched everywhere for her—in the conservatories and hall, but you had better wake her up at once, and leave me for the present."

"Where could the girl have gone," she mut-

tered, ready to give way to some burst of ungovernable anger. "She, so timid, frightened of her own shadow. It would be too odious if my suspicions have any foundation, that she cares for Lionel Hargrave, a landscape gardener, the man who saved her life after that accident happened on the ice last winter. Well, I shall watch and wait, and keep my eyes open. Constance declines to accompany us to Brighton next week; thinks the excitement of the parade will be too much for her nerves. The girl was always peculiar, and really at times I doubt if she be quite in her senses."

To her ladyship's high-bred theories it seemed incredible that this girl, her sister, should so far forget the canons of society and good taste as to even accord gratitude to the lowly-born. The lowly-born, of course (according to her ladyship's theory), existed principally to make life easy and comfortable by their toil to the Harringtons and Vandemeres of the world. That they should ever be weary, or dare to possess hopes, feelings, or ambitions never entered her thoughts. She only regretted they could not be nourished and fattened, like Nebuchadnezzar, on grasses and weeds, or the suction from nettles and house-leeks.

Lady Violet dressed herself very carefully according to her custom after her bath. She preferred to perform her morning toilette without the assistance of Sophia Meredith, her fashionable lady's maid. She flung open her wardrobe drawer, and chose a dark grey cashmere dress, trimmed with costly cherry-coloured chenille fringes, the last "best thing" from Paris, that Worth pronounced cheap at forty guineas, and that Lady Violet purchased as she purchased her horses and blue china, Spaniels,

and small dogs, because somebody else said they were charming, and only worthy of herself.

This woman's selfishness would have been awful had she been conscious of it, but she adopted such a naive air of child-like simplicity when she spoke of herself that everybody said:

"She is truly a magnificent creature, so averse to display, that the quiet taste and the perfect good sense she shows in the selection of her dresses and friends, only prove how thoroughly aristocratic ancestry exalts such women above all 'average clay.'"

"Average clay" must take what it can get and be thankful; it is one of the wise arrangements of this world. The one aim and dream of Lady Violet was centred in the hope of achieving the feat of landing a wealthy husband. She was rich, but she wanted to be richer still. Acquisitiveness in women is far more intense a passion than in men, and marriage, the one sop offered to women of all descriptions, appealed to her ladyship's imagination as a pure speculation, nothing more. Love, romance and constancy were like the ring of "sounding brass or tinkling cymbals."

She disapproved of love in the abstract as an uncomfortable passion; capable of disturbing the peace of households and making even duchesses weep and suffer from dyspepsia, besides affording detestable scandals (for the amusement of the vulgar million). So a bas l'amour! Lady Violet's victims were, however, numerous, and considering their forlorn condition, hopeful and cheerful to an extraordinary degree. For if one weak-minded and elegant dipsomaniac—the despair of friends, and the delight of "speculating physicians," an attaché to a foreign legation—threatened one day to drown himself in a reservoir, take a leap like Quintus Curtius when Lady Violet snubbed him "not wisely, but too well," the he-nighted youth thought better of the affair after her ladyship's wise little lecture, and turned his horse in a contrary direction.

Attachés, as a rule, are not addicted to leaps in the dark for the sake of the most heartless Lady Violets.

Many guests were now visiting at the Hall, and Lady Violet was really an unexceptionable hostess; the comfort of everyone was studied, and plenty of amusement provided. Riding, music, singing, reading, billiards, flirting—what more could any mortal require? And when we add the great French artist, Grandier, chef of the Duke of Glantine, presided over the minor satellites of the kitchen, and presented a daily bill of fare that a Sallust must have revelled in, all must admit life at the earl's home not half a bad sort of thing at all.

There was only one person at the Hall with a tender woman's heart, only one girl who thought of others' needs, and hastened to relieve them, and this girl was the Lady Constance. Granted that she was weak and even blameable in allowing her heart to escape from her safe keeping, the fact that Lionel Hargrave had saved her life must be, of course, taken into consideration. Vainly had she struggled against her unfortunate love; it was the master passion of her life.

To be his wife seemed to reveal a heaven of joy. She feared her sister, she hated the cold conventionalism of society. The men who courted her were for the most part fortune-hunters, cold and profligate specimens of "the modern manners and the modern philosophy." Lionel had sworn he would never touch one farthing of her money; that he would offer her his name only when that name had blended into one she need not blush for, and when his wealth equalled or exceeded hers.

Sir Hugh Allerton, the best favoured suitor at the Hall, had agreed to ride with Lady Violet after luncheon to-day, and the horses were now pawing the ground, impatient to feel the springy turf under their feet. Lady Violet had no idea his property was heavily mortgaged and encumbered, or he might not have been the favoured mortal selected on this occasion; for an Austrian count, an intimate friend of the

Duchess de Vandemere, a nobleman ready to perform any social duties at any moment, possessed a rent-roll of fifteen thousand a year, and what with his superb scowls, military moustache, hauteur, and grand air, had rather affected Lady Violet's fancy; but Sir Hugh was so thoroughly bright and charming, and above all so good-natured, she yielded upon second thoughts to his offer of a ride, sooner than form a bad third in the drawing-room.

"So Eustacie will have it all her own way this morning with Reichenstadt," thought Lady Violet, as Sir Hugh swung her into the saddle. "Poor duke, 'tis time he hurried home from Baden-Baden, if he wishes to avoid a duel and pistols, and coffee for four in the early dawn. She's long past the playful stage, and Reichenstadt, with his theatrical airs and tragic shrugs, may be really dangerous."

As they passed along the lower road of the park they met Lionel Hargrave returning with a drawing in his hand. He had been suggesting some artistic design to the earl for the improvement of the grounds. He raised his hat seeing Lady Violet and Sir Hugh Allerton. His brother! had he only known.

"That seems a very promising sort of fellow," said Sir Hugh, patronisingly, as he rode on. "I had some conversation with him a little time since, and it is really astonishing how varied his information is."

"I really cannot see what persons of his stamp want with varied learning; his business is to study landscape gardening."

"Sounds somehow like landscape painting. Monstrous slow work that," said Sir Hugh, curling his moustache. How your sister can sit hour after hour designing patterns—

"Flower painting, you mean," Lady Violet explained, hastily. "I fear your view of art is decidedly cloudy."

With this mild snub Sir Hugh mutters, "By Jove," and pats his horse's neck. He reflects she may be rather too formidable as a wife.

There is no fervid speed in his subsequent remarks. He reflects before he speaks. Meanwhile Lady Constance, whose mind was very far from being engrossed by the magnificent ideas of ambition that occupied her sister, and who possessed one of those sensitive and retiring natures content with any sacrifice if only love is left them, wandered down the garden in the direction of Lionel's cottage. She estimated him at his true worth, not as a poor and humble man only, but as one of Nature's gentlemen, and she believed he must distinguish himself with his great and varied powers, no matter what disadvantageous circumstances or unfortunate adjustment of events. She remembered the abject terror and dismay that had seized those around her when she sank through the sullen waters of the lake—the calculation of self—the imperfect resolutions.

It was Lionel only who had sprung forward to her rescue, and gratitude had awoke her tenderest love, and so she left the brilliant aristocrats and careless idlers to themselves. She might be foolish, wrong, imprudent—all the world would say so, but then she was happy, and just as some minds have no mental faculty for religion, no longing after the infinite, no perceptions of immortality, so are others so encased in frivolity, so decked out in mere mercenary sentiment, that they can perceive nothing enthralling in the sentiment of a pure and generous love.

This girl was one of those kind, simple souls, satisfied with obscurity and even poverty, if their affections were satisfied. Grief and agony would soon warp and destroy her, for what others could conquer by their reason, would destroy her—her heart must beat or break for the idol of her soul.

Lionel saw her approaching, and ran to meet her. She wore a broad brimmed, white straw hat, with one long drooping feather falling over her luxuriant hair, and her dress was one of simple style and make, which harmonised well with her naive, delicate prettiness.

"How good of you to think of me," he said, in his tense, quiet way, "to leave your friends at the Hall for one of the populace."

Lady Constance coloured like a rosebud warmed by summer's sun. This man of the populace, this man with the pale, handsome face, and the thin tapering fingers, one of the canaille! Indeed, nature made rare mistakes sometimes. Lionel spoke now more impulsively, and the bitterness so often apparent in his mood had changed. After all, it was she who sought him, and how could he help being glad?

"Do you know, Lionel," she said, regarding him steadily, "if you changed, or were false to me, I should go mad or die—of this I am quite sure; you are my existence and my soul; an inexplicable charm draws me towards you, fuses our spirits in one. I have given up controlling it—I can only love."

There was fresh brilliance in her large dark eyes, there was truth in her accents; it was almost pitiful to listen to the tone in which she spoke, the certain conviction of her self-abandonment.

"And when you talk of marriage at some far distant time, when you have gained a name and a fortune, you are cruel, because you are proud—too proud to accept my wealth, to give me the pleasure of bestowing my riches on you."

"You forget we must have a little common-sense in our struggles with life and the inevitable," he answered, "and that I, if even of the people, beneath you in everything, have some right to self respect, and when you seem to me like some fair vision, some star only fit for a brilliant Heaven, when my love for you gets the better of my judgment, I have still enough reason and strength to save you from a mesalliance, from defying the scorn of the heartless and worldly."

"You speak to me, Lionel, as if I were a woman of the world, when I have neither the wish nor the capacity to shine or rule in society. I am only a simple woman, ready to become a peasant if it is necessary—but no, it is not necessary, you will let me enrich you, you will not thrust aside the goods the gods send. You spoke once of a private marriage, Lionel," and her head sinks on his breast; "when our hearts once beat in rapture you agreed to this; if even you found it necessary to sail away to that other land, to gain a fortune for yourself—well, Lionel, know then that my brain can no longer bear this perpetual harass and strain; this stealing away in disguise to visit you in secret is odious to my tastes and senses—it is indeed killing me, Lionel."

"You would consent to a private marriage, my darling," he whispered, leading her to a small rustic seat overshadowed by a huge oak, "if even I had to leave you afterwards. You would prefer to marry me, to be left behind as my wife. Oh, Heaven, the very thought of it is like a draught of cold water to a thirsty soul!"

"Yes, Lionel, I could then exist. I should feel the sacredness of the bond, the pledge of our fidelity, and my prayers would be less agonising, my anguish less fatal."

"You would accept me then as your husband—I, poor and nameless, with only this weak right hand to trust to?"

"I would sooner have the honour and privilege of being your wife, Lionel, than marrying the first duke of the land. You are true, your intellect is brilliant and noble, you are a poet; if a worker a gentleman, according to my own heart, brave, upright, and self-denying."

"If I should ever harm you, dear Lady Constance, by a private marriage—if there should be humiliations and privations in store for you, will you remember your words to me this day when your reproaches may sting; your woundings must be unendurable? If you were to upbraid—and yet what rapture to think your bright loveliness will shine but for me alone."

"I reproach you—ah, Lionel, you little know me. I have implored you since you confessed you love me to give me the right to be your nearest on earth—your wife, your own soul. Your absence will then lose half its sting. I shall feel resigned, even elate, spite of all the grief of parting. If ever you should send for me to join you, dearest, I will come and shed tears of

joy at the thought of our reunion. If you bid me work, I will toil, if you bid me die, I will perish without a murmur."

He bowed his head and drew her tenderly towards him.

"Without you, Lionel, the world will be one vast prison house, soon to become my sepulchre, but I will bless you with my dying breath, and if I lose my reason, my ravings will be only of you, and of my devotion."

She looked, he thought, strangely wasted and worn, a delicate, fragile girl, but like all martyrs, strong in her love.

"If you refuse my prayer, Lionel, then I would wish the waters of the lake had closed over me ere you rushed to save me, for it is hard that the rescuer should at last turn to be the destroyer."

"Hush, my love, do not speak such wild words; if I have hesitated, it has been for your sake, not my own; you, so delicately reared, so patrician, so sweet, the fairest ideal I have ever dreamed of, the muse that solaces every hour; be my wife, if it is your wish, my beloved, to-morrow I will procure a license at St. Elfrida's Church, and on the week following you will be my wife."

"I shall be content, Lionel, if once I am united to you for ever in this world," she answered, simply; "through good and evil report, through pain and penury—if those woes should ever reach us—through all life, and in death, your wife, the very words send comfort to my soul; the wild and desolate waste the world once seemed to me is narrowed into a lovely spot, where the word home will one day be inscribed, 'our home.' Lionel, till then I can await in patience. 'Your wife!'"

There was no reason in her speech; it was only the impetuous impulses of first love that spoke and would be heard, and he listening, imaged the future away from England and his love, because he was too proud to accept her wealth with no equivalent to offer. Wealth and fame must be earned for her sake some day, and he loved her, as men love something beyond their world and ken, as a "bright particular star" shining over him in his hours of loneliness and depression, making all around a Paradise, earth was no longer a tangled wilderness—a desert of sinister paths and perplexed meanings, but an Eden, with flowers decking every bower; and as they revelled in the mutual joy of anticipation Lady Violet and Sir Hugh Allerton, after returning from their ride, sauntered down the avenue in the direction of Lionel's cottage.

He heard the muttered and indistinct hum of voices approaching, and beseeched Lady Constance to enter his cottage. Lady Violet was laughing in derision at some speech of Sir Hugh's, for Lionel heard her say:

"Really, Sir Hugh, you are growing quite too ridiculous in your flatteries."

Lionel thought her voice unkind; it jarred and irritated him unconsciously.

"Hush!" answered Sir Hugh, vexed at her raileries, "or that gardener fellow will overhear you, and he is far too clever not to pity me."

"I wonder where that tiresome Constance can be hiding. Dressing for dinner, I suppose, or inspecting the new lawn tennis," Lady Violet was saying, hastily changing the subject.

"Probably painting flowers, I should say. 'Pon honour, I'm beginning to think we've had enough of the fresh air, and nature's charms, and all that sort of thing, for one day."

As they passed on towards the Hall Lionel breathed as if relieved.

"We had a narrow escape of the enemy, my darling," he said, as Lady Constance issued from the porch. "Your sister and Sir Hugh Allerton have just passed by."

"When once I am your wife I can not only brave their scorn, but that of the world. I shall gain my triumph in your love."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHADOW OF A PAST CRIME.

When its wound was closed there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

THE sweetness of Lady Constance's disposition had something fatal in its pliability. Nothing could destroy her sympathy for others, but sometimes harsh words and tones affected her mind like a sorrow.

The very absence of her capacity for taking a strong interest in worldliness and ambitious projects suggested a certain mental weakness or indolence. She was in truth somewhat too ready to abandon herself to despair; too eager to repose in other's judgment, or to be talked down by her friends. But where her affections were concerned she was firm as a rock, true as steel.

In affection she was obstinate, defiant, enduring, and her love for Lionel Hargrave had gained that fatal ascendancy over her reason as to prove the utter unreasonableness of all genuine passion. Lionel had become at last convinced that with so singular a temperament, the only way to save her from some strange, unaccountable frenzy was to make her his wife—to bestow on a woman whose name was one of the proudest in England his own obscure one; he found it powerless to combat her entreaties, and feared some malady of the brain might really overtake her, were she to find her hopes baffled.

He had only hesitated on her account; it seemed as if his own bitter experience of poverty must warn him against bringing a wretched doom on the woman he loved; but then she was rich. And yet to take her wealth seemed base and ignoble. What then remained for him to do?

Lady Constance rose at five, and throwing herself on her knees breathed a few passionate prayers to Heaven. She prayed that she might be forgiven her disobedience to her father, her filial love, and her complete abandonment to the rulings of her heart. She dreaded her sister—she feared the venomous outpourings of her angry speech, and alas! there was Lionel, still firm in his resolve to leave England—still too proud to live on her money, without an equivalent to offer in return.

She wept silently for a few minutes, still kneeling in prayer; she suffered acutely. She was on the brink of an irrevocable act—a secret marriage, it was true, with her soul's idol, but one surrounded by so many cruel complications—so much doubt and suspense and misery—no wonder she trembled, as though the future revealed itself in tragic colours.

"If he would but stay in peace in England," she murmured, "instead of leaving me here till his return. What to me will be his gold, with my happiness all sundered and shattered, and, if he should never gain that desired fortune, and die away from me in Australia, then must death and torment be reserved for me."

The thought was too agonising. She would fain dream of their happy reunion—their fervid love.

"Nevertheless, to be his wife is the only desire of my existence," she muttered, taking up the little cloak thrown across the chair, "and soon I shall call him 'husband.' Thank Heaven for that. I have often felt my life could never be long, but at least it will now be blessed."

Without the perfection of that beauty which appeals to the eye more than the heart or mind, she was beautiful with the light of hope and joy that seemed to shine from the love-lit splendour of her eyes. Lady Constance sighed once, that tragic sigh, that sounds like an echo from the tomb, and still kneeling, prayed for a blessing on the household.

The guests had now all departed; her sister and father were at Brighton, and she, pleading ill health, remained to wed Lionel. When she stole down the stairs scarcely any of the servants were up; she roamed through the grounds alone, followed by her favourite dog Oscar, a magnificent hound, and ever and anon she

would pause and kiss his honest head through her tears.

A woman who weeps thinking of her wedding morn may consider those tears evil portents; still some sentiment must be forgiven in an earl's daughter who has stooped to marry a landscape gardener. Women, ever in extremes, will take no guide but their own inclinations when once the heart has spoken and been listened to; and the very weakness of her mental powers made her less able to realise the dangerous position in which she must soon be placed. Such a marriage is a purely selfish act; she was wronging those to whom she was bound by the ties of flesh and blood; but are not nearly all our acts selfish when inclinations are followed? and after all, very little sisterly or fatherly love the unfortunate girl had ever received. She had ever been so lonely in her splendid solitude.

At the same time that Lady Constance returned to the Hall, Lionel sat down to his simple meal at the cottage. There was no agitation in his mien, only that serene thoughtfulness amounting to grandeur in men of his disposition. The act he intended to commit—this secret marriage—should have nothing despicable in its result. This he swore; he had the courage to leave his bride and England to make a fortune. He should convince her of his tenacity of purpose; his strength; his firmness. There was something stern about his lips—lips bespeaking the poet and orator—that resolved on victory. Turning round he saw Aphra at his elbow.

He was so accustomed to her unexpected appearances he scarcely started, but smiled, and the colour flew to his temples. He had never withheld a secret from her in his life. He knew how she could be trusted, how faithful was her devotion.

"Dear mother," he said, kindly, "your visit is opportune, for my marriage-day is fixed."

The gipsy started to her feet and seized his hand.

"Your marriage-day, Lionel; then you have given up that wild love-dream, that worship of the earl's daughter, a woman as much above you as that sun is in the Heaven. It is well, my son, it is well, only grief and despair ever come of loving one out of our condition."

"No, mother, you are wrong."

"It is some simple village maiden, Lionel, who has accepted you, a peasant's daughter, glad to walk humbly by your side?"

"I am going to marry the Lady Constance Harrington," he said, firmly, "the earl's daughter, and this very day week."

Aphra threw herself by his side, and clutched his hand.

"Only misery can come of this marriage, Lionel. I can read destiny. Listen, my son, there is a secret in your history. A gipsy's curse is terrible, and a gipsy's revenge is ever sure."

She paused for breath. He motioned her aside with careless courtesy.

"You have hinted at this before," he said, sternly. "You have refused to reveal this secret to me. Then know that from this hour I devote myself to learn who my father was—to redress your wrongs and my own."

A wild shriek rent the air, and the gipsy grovelled at his feet.

"He was a villain, Lionel. Oh! be sure of it; he broke my heart, he robbed me of peace for ever, and do you know what will become of me the day you learn his name? See, here in this phial is the deadliest poison known, and the hour you learn the truth, Lionel, finds me dead, and you will have elain me."

Her passion was fearful.

"My son," she moaned, "what have I revealed? Oh, my son! my son!"

"Strange words for a man to listen to as he speaks of his wedding-day," Lionel said, raising her to her feet; "and some might find evil foreshadowed by their sinister meaning. Oh! father, so long absent and unknown, Heaven is my witness how many weary hours of musing have I given to your memory! You have robbed me of a name, and you have enshrouded me in a mystery that will enshadow all my future life

in gloom. Prince or peasant, what dark plot waits to be revealed, and why should guilt under various forms track the innocent, like some adder that, if casting its skin, still retains its venom, and blight the career of youth?"

"Lionel," she murmured, laying her fevered hand on his, "remember I shall bless you on your marriage day, as I have ever blessed you since you nestled a helpless infant to my breast, it warmed, it sheltered, it cherished you. What- ever may be others' sins and mine against you, remember these arms held you fast and kept you safe, my son, through all."

"Dearest mother, am I likely to forget your goodness; but this secret you hint at oppresses and distracts me. If the man calling himself my father were a villain, tell me of him that I may avenge your wrongs."

He spoke as an ancient Greek might have addressed his enemies, wearied out with the caprices of fortune and the fickleness of his gods, pursued by the torments of incessant fear and hatred.

"It is true he forsook me," she faltered, palling at his scrutiny.

"Then show me his dwelling, and take me to him; let him confront his son face to face."

"I cannot. The man you seek is dead!"

Dead! This man he had sworn to seek and pursue—to bring to account for his treachery, was dead! The grave shielded him from all further punishment. His infamy was concealed by corruption, worms guarded the secret chambers of that evil heart, while death imparted even a sanctity to his memory.

"Being dead will not prevent my determination to discover what his life held of fraud and baseness," he muttered. "I know how terrible it is to wander through the world with none to call friend, with none to trust in or to care for, and this unknown father may have been my worst enemy."

"He was," assented Aphra. She did not think at that moment of the wrong she herself had wrought on the innocent, but only of the dead man's guilt—to her.

"And your motive," continued Lionel, coldly, "for withholding this secret from me?"

"I am not yet tired of life," she answered, brokenly.

"Well, then, I laugh to scorn the silent injury guarded by the tomb. I will marry the girl I love, and defy social taunts and wounds, gaining the respect of my fellow men by energy and toil. I will leave England and seek my fortune in a far distant land. This is all that is left to me, seeing I am nameless and next door to a pauper."

"He will leave England and go across the sea," she muttered, sobbingly.

"I cannot wander aimlessly through crowded towns and thoroughfares, neither can I fatten on the goods a wealthy wife may bring me. This alone must make a man lose his self-respect and interest in life. I, a stolid machine, fed at fixed times, to be led out for derision or speculation! I, a cattle-browsing, lazy animal, fit subject for contempt and scorn, with no sense of duty and no purpose! Never, mother, never. She shall yet be proud of her husband; though these hands have been acquainted with physical toil, does that remove my claim to being a gentleman, more especially as I half suspect my dead father, whatever his crimes, bore a title, and one of the loftiest in the land."

"But as for rank, I spurn it. 'Tis but for my fair love's sake I shall try to succeed, that she shall have no cause to blush for the husband of her choice; and standing here, mother, with the morning sun shining on this humble cottage roof, I can even bow my head and thank my Maker for the capacities he has endowed me with, and the will that bids me crush difficulties under heel, hydra-headed and venomous though they may be."

"You will conquer, Lionel, yours the soaring spirit that never looks back; yours, the genius that must win success. I can but repeat that I bless you; may all happiness attend you both."

After she had gone, Lionel went to his desk, and opening a drawer, drew out a small book, the writing yellow and indistinct with age. He

had found it years ago among some hoards of Aphra's, and this is what he read:

"BRIGHTON,

"November 14th, 18—."

"If my poor darling A— were only less mournful, she would be far more agreeable; even her threats, which are a little stagey, and suggest the 'property weapon' business, have decidedly more flavour, and I do so sincerely hate scenes, tirades, emotion. This excellent gipsy, who has really missed her vocation—she would have made an undeniably good Italian fish vendor, by-the-bye—I will paint her some day, with a basket on her too lovely head—wants me to marry her."

"Now the idea is wild, and until I am mad, and take facts for ideas, the thing can have no tangible reality. I know the song is very pretty which says:

And I'll make thee a countess
My own gipsy maid,

but was that earl in debt? Debt is a stern reality. Poor dear A— is a splendid woman, and she talks of her relations—the Egyptians, very nicely indeed, as if she knew the ancestors of the mummies in the British Museum, and declares the Jews are of very much later descent."

"Now being considerably in the hands of the Jews, gentlemen, I have the greatest possible respect for—but whose acquaintance is undesirable—I must really inform my poor A—that marriage with her is not to be thought of. I've offered her money, which she has scorned—all these tawny, passionate women scorn money till they find the want of it, and so I and poor A— must part. I don't like to think of it, so I'm writing this to ease my mind. I met A— at the Acton races, and a woman selling wallflowers and water-cresses, and telling fortunes, scarcely ever presents herself to a nobleman in the light of a desirable wife. Some erratic spirits might find a charm in the novelty of the idea—romance is charming—but then I am—we know what the sublime Horace says—not romantic."

"I gave her my signet ring by-the-bye (which I'm happy to hear she says she has lost). Poor dear A— was always amazingly careless, and when I offered her that ring, I was surprisingly tipsy on the vilest champagne it has ever been my misfortune to be poisoned with at suburban races. A— lifted the ring to her lips, and I've no doubt instead of raising three guineas on it at a village pawnbroker's like a sensible and discriminating person, she wore it inside her dress, and it slipped through her stays and got lost. The supposition, although possibly the wrong one, may stand for what it's worth. 'You never loved me,' she whines, in the most dolorous tones ever heard off the stage. 'You want to get rid of me, you hate and spurn me, but beware, my lord, beware!' and so on; it would read very well in print I daresay, but it savors of rant, pearl powder, and gin and bitters in some transpontine theatre, while I fancy myself a dirty stage villain at thirty shillings a week."

"I, of course, declare gipseys have been my adoration ever since my boyish intellect was nourished on the charming fiction relating to them. 'But you will not marry me,' she urges, 'will you swear to marry no other.' Now this I consider illogical and inconsistent, but truly and delightfully feminine. 'I should soon learn to read and write if you would but teach me,' she also says, pathetically. I imagine myself armed with ferule and primer, and find the notion impracticable but irresistibly droll."

"My poor A— is a creature of impulse, she roars like a wounded tigress when I express my inability and regret at not leading her to the hymeneal altar. I am on the look out for a first class matrimonial spec remember, and to marry a gipsy would be original, but worse than wedding a coarse scullery-maid. If women only knew how men detest weeping and reproachful words, and how they pine to be

flattered, amused and elated, how they like brightness in women, they would spare us their jeremiads."

"I am longing for a glimpse of my enivrante beauty, my adorable Flavia, queen of wits, goddess of fashion, whose dry champagne is of the finest quality, who understands Bahco, and who has completely ruined poor old R—. Fellows in the Guards are apt to fall easy victims to women's wiles. Oh, for a glimpse of that transcendent loveliness—the tiny foot peeping from beneath the heavily embroidered jupe, the perfume of all that is divine and enticing about this over-womanised celebrity. My handsome gipsy commences to bore me considerably with her woes and wrongs, so vive la Bagatelle."

Lionel closed the book with a shiver and a half-muttered oath. The man who wrote it was a heartless scoundrel, whom he should like to hold up to public scorn, and this man was his father.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

EARTH CURRENTS.

THE action of the currents of electricity that pass round the earth may be conveniently exhibited to a large audience by the following arrangement, devised by Professor W. Le Roy Broun. A rectangular frame of light poplar wood is suspended horizontally by wires attached to the frame of a hydrostatic balance, its longer sides in the magnetic east and west line, and at right angles with the beam of the balance. About the perimeter of the frame are previously wrapped a number of coils of insulated copper wire, each extremity of the wire being made to terminate near the centre of one of the shorter sides; it is there passed through the wood, fastened, and cut off about 3 centimetres from the frame.

The index of the balance being brought to zero point, the ends of the short terminal wires are immersed in two mercury cups for electrical connection. When the battery current is sent round the rectangle from east to west on the northern side, and from west to east on the southern, the northern side is attracted and the southern is repelled, and the corresponding deflection of the balance renders this plainly visible. When the current is reversed, the deflection is in the opposite direction.

By breaking and closing the circuit at proper intervals, to augment the oscillations, Professor Broun easily made the large frame oscillate through an arc of 5°. When the sides of the rectangle were placed N.E. and S.W. the current produced no sensible effect.

THE USE OF SALT FOR MUSEUM PURPOSES.

At a recent meeting of the Geneva Society of Physics and Natural History, Professor Alph. de Candolle exhibited a glass jar containing fruits of the coffee plant, collected before maturity, in Mexico, preserved in a liquid which chemical analysis proved to be salt water. It is fifty years since the jar thus filled was hermetically sealed, under the eyes of Aug. Pyr. de Candolle, and to-day the coffee beans which it contains are in a thoroughly satisfactory state of preservation.

The water contains a solution of common salt, and very small quantities of other chlorides or salts. No gas was found in solution, showing that the water must have been boiled, and introduced while hot into the jar. This experiment may prove a valuable hint to curators of natural history and medical museums as to the substitution of salt water for alcohol (the inconvenience of which everyone knows) for the preservation of organic specimens.

NONE are too wise to be mistaken, but few are so wisely just as to correct their mistakes.



[MURDERED.]

ALICE DESMOND'S TROTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XV.

A DARK DEED.

The blow was fired that left him dead;
Here in the twilight such a deed was done
As fills the night with awe and dread.

WILLIAM GORDON was surprised enough at meeting the girl he had known as Sybil Lester at Bolton Castle. The story of their acquaintance was very short, very simple, but yet it was the one romance of the girl's life.

When the Lesters were living at Putney, and as usual over head and ears in debt and difficulties, chance had thrown Sybil in William Gordon's way. Her strange beauty had attracted him, and he had made it worth her father's while to let her sit to him as a model. There were long hours passed by the two alone together. He had not seen Alice Desmond then; the love which was to be his life's one passion had not come. Sybil was beautiful, and he told her so; he paid her many attentions; gave her low, sweet flattery; spoke to her in winning tones. To him it was the pastime of an hour; to her the beginning of her destiny. She believed far more than he had meant her to; the idea of marriage never entered his head. She believed firmly that when fame came to him he would ask her to share it with him.

The picture was a success—his first success, and when he took her to see it he told her he owed his good fortune only to her; that she was

his good angel. He gave her his likeness and said good-bye; a tenderer good-bye than friends often say. Then he went down to Ashton to meet his fate, and she moved with her family to Marchioness Road. From that day he sent her neither word or line. His acquaintance with her was to him already a thing of the past. The hope of his return seemed to gild her sordid life with a happiness she had never known.

We heard the consultation among the Lesters respecting the Lady Alice Morton. When Sybil proposed the wild scheme of making herself known to her cousin, it was not without a hope that such a connection might bring her nearer the man she loved. She went to Bolton Castle and gained admittance there, not as a relative of the young heiress, but as her maid.

Yes, Nancy Bates was Sybil Lester, but she found her task difficult to a degree. Alice Morton was not the weak girl she had expected, and she never forgot the difference between herself and her maid.

The scene at the Academy was the first suspicion Sybil conceived that there was a mystery in her cousin's life; before this Harry had married his publican's daughter and entered into the business himself, and Ju was engrossed by her sailor. So excepting the old folks, Sybil had no one left to scheme for.

She stayed on in her menial position because William Gordon had begun to visit at the house, and she sought an opportunity to attract his notice. So well did Alice Morton guard her secret that though Nancy knew perfectly well she had a clandestine suitor, she had no suspicion it was her own hero. Alice destroyed every scrap of writing she received from him. She met him only when the darkness could conceal them.

Nancy, in spite of all her vigilance, discovered nothing until the night when she forestalled her mistress and kept the appointment in her stead.

It was a chance, yet a chance which decided the future of four lives. Alice Morton, as she

believed, tore her detested lover's note into fragments, as was her custom. The note she destroyed was another written on precisely similar paper, and folded in the same manner. The original she left on her dressing-table, where it was seized by Nancy's eager hands.

"To-night at nine, in the arbour. My darling, be merciful to me. WILLIAM GORDON."

Sybil Lester was not a fine lady, she had led a hard, struggling life, yet, as those words met her eyes for one instant she felt near fainting; then mechanically she set about putting away the mass of jewels and flowers Lady Alice had left about before descending to dinner.

"I am very tired," she said to old Martha. "If you think my lady would excuse me from undressing her, I'd go to bed."

"Go on," said Martha, kindly, noticing the weary look on the girl's usually bright face. "I'll see to my lady. But you'd better come down and get a bit of supper."

But she refused, and the old woman went downstairs without her. Then the maid took from her mistress's wardrobe a plain white muslin dress, and let her splendid hair (which she usually wore coiled round her head) stream over her shoulders. She dressed herself quickly in Alice's dress, and then stood fixedly looking at her own face in the mirror.

"Has the money won him to her?" she murmured. "Surely I am her equal in other things."

She carried her own clothes to the room she occupied, wrapped herself in a dark cloak, and stole noiselessly down the grand staircase, while all the world were at dinner. One half hour afterwards she reached the arbour, threw off her cloak, and sat down to await Gordon. Something told her Lady Alice would be last at the trysting place; of meeting her she had no fear. No living soul ever knew quite how Sybil had spent the last half hour before she entered the arbour.

Her eyes gleamed with passion as she repeated her question:

"Did you mean all you said when you told me you loved me?"

Gordon answered nothing. Never was position like unto his. Any moment might bring Lady Alice upon him. He was not a coward, and yet his courage absolutely quailed before the passion in Sybil's voice.

"Speak," she urged.

"I liked you very much. You pleased me and I told you so. I love everything beautiful, you among the rest."

"I will never be loved 'among the rest,' I will be loved by myself, or not at all."

"Then let it be not at all," he said, decidedly. "You were a very charming model, Sybil, and made time pass very pleasantly to me, but I meant nothing so serious as you seem to have imagined, and if you consider yourself injured we had better be as strangers for the future."

"Then it is true!" cried the girl. "You are going to marry her, that wax doll, Lady Alice, because she happens to be rich. Much your love must be worth when gold can buy it."

"Gold cannot buy it," he said, calmly. "I loved Lady Alice Morton when she was nameless and poor. My one hope is to marry her, and I beg you not to take her name upon your lips until you can mention it with the respect due to my future wife."

The girl turned on him with a bitter laugh:

"You shall never marry her!"

"I do not see how you can prevent it. A man may admire beauty, Miss Lester, but because he has done so it is no proof he means to marry that beauty. You have given my words a meaning I never intended. Must I speak plain? You never were, you never can be more to me than an interesting friend."

"Then whatever you drive me to do the blame must rest on you. You won my heart away by your honied words. I got to love you as good people love Heaven. I longed to be great and rich for your sake. I never doubted you would come back to me. You were my last thought at night and my first at waking. I loved your likeness as my dearest treasure. You were more to me than father, mother, brother, or sister. My whole mind was full of you. You were my love, my life, and all the while to you I was only an 'interesting friend.'"

"I am not a good woman. Girls dragged up as I have been don't often turn out well, but I should have made you a true wife; loved you so that I should have made myself better for your sake. I was so proud of wearing your name that I should have gloried in your success and cried over your failures. When the world was kind to you I should have triumphed, when it frowned I should have comforted you. And you cast me away as a discarded glove!"

His own words to Alice Morton. Gordon shivered as he heard them thus repeated in the summer night.

The girl thought he was changing. She knelt at his feet; she took his hand and covered it with passionate kisses.

"My darling, you did not mean what you said. Tell me it was only her money tempted you. Say you will be true to me."

"I never was anything to you," he said, angrily, longing to bring the scene to a close. "I never shall be. End these reproaches so distressing to us both, and leave me."

"I will never leave you to marry her," said the distracted girl. Then, quick as lightning, she drew a pistol from her bosom. She fired! Gordon fell heavily to the ground. Still holding the pistol Sybil turned and fled, almost knocking against her mistress as she tore along.

Alice Morton hardly heeded. It was after nine, for she had been detained in the drawing-room. She wondered whether Gordon would be waiting for her. She wondered how he would greet her, and whether he would be merciful. And then she entered the arbour and found him motionless on the ground—the ground which was already stained with his blood. Almost beside herself, Alice knelt beside him, and called on him pitifully to speak. No voice answered her. The hand she had taken seemed feebly to return her pressure, then

even that relaxed. Alice was alone with the dead!

CHAPTER XVI.

SOLD AT LAST.

So much of death her thoughts had entertained
As dyed her cheeks with pale. MURROW.

Of course she did not remain long so, the tidings must soon have reached the castle; but Alice Morton was spared the exquisite torture of carrying them there. Others beside William Gordon and the two women whose destinies had crossed his path were abroad that August night. The pistol report which Alice in her preoccupation had not noticed, fell on the ears of Edwin Bolton as he roamed solitarily about his father's grounds smoking a cigar. Quickly he hastened to the spot whence the sound had come. Five minutes after Alice's hand was freed when he entered the arbour.

He may live to be an old man; his cheeks may be sunken, and his hair silvered, but he will never forget the agony of that moment. There was just light enough for him to discern a prostrate form and a slight, white-robed figure bending over it. There, in the voice he had learned to love, came the words:

"Oh, Edwin! tell me, is he dead?"

She had never called him Edwin in her life before. Never had he heard her voice so full of emotion. Poor fellow, he thought he guessed it all; this was the man she had met before; the man she loved, and he was lying dead, killed by his own hand.

"Alice, you must come away; this is no fit place for you."

But she only repeated, wildly:

"Tell me, is he dead? If so, I am his murderer."

"Hush!" said Edwin, gravely. "Alice, come away. Say nothing so false and wrong. Let me take you to the house and send for help for him."

He knew right well all was over, but he could not tell her so, believing firmly that she had loved the man who was a corpse.

He led her slowly back to the house, neither speaking a single word, but when she crept trembling into the brilliantly-lighted hall she just whispered:

"Don't send anyone to me; let me be alone."

And then she went on to her own rooms. Edwin entered the dining-room where the gentlemen still lingered over their wine. He knew concealment was impossible, and spoke at once. After all none there was near and dear to the hapless man save the terrified girl he had just left.

"Father, an awful accident has happened. Mr. Gordon is lying in the arbour dangerously wounded, if not dead."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lord Bolton, hastily. "Edwin, you must be dreaming; he was here at dinner."

"It is too true. As I was passing near the arbour I heard the report of a pistol. I looked about a little and then went to the arbour. It was as I told you."

Everyone looked anxious. A tragedy in your midst banishes composure, much more mirth. A sudden gloom shadowed the whole party. His grace of Burnham broke the silence:

"If Gordon is dead, he never fell by his own hand; there has been foul play somewhere. No man ever had fairer prospects, or loved life better."

Lord Bolton rose abruptly; he rang for servants and lanterns, merely saying there had been an accident in the arbour. Then he turned to his son, and by his question clearly proved he shared the duke's opinion.

"You saw no one about, I suppose, Edwin? no suspicious character?"

And Captain Bolton, brave, truthful as he was, lied for a woman's sake.

"I saw no one, no one at all."

Then the melancholy procession started, Lord

Bolton and the duke at its head, Edwin following in the rear. If ever man felt presentiment of coming evil he felt it then. A nameless something told him that the first breath of a storm which should, perhaps, embitter his whole life had broken.

Gordon was lain on his own bed. All knew life was extinct, yet the surgeon was sent for. He came at once. A man of rare skill for a country practitioner, and who enjoyed Lord Bolton's confidence.

"It is quite useless," he said, in reply to the peer's inquiries. "He has been dead more than an hour."

Lord Bolton drew him into the library and shut the door. Mr. Gresham saw that some further explanation was required of him. He offered none.

"The poor fellow was at dinner to-night as well and cheerful as possible," began Lord Bolton. "He did not leave the dining-room until after eight. No one would have expected he should attempt his life."

"He did not attempt it," was the quiet reply.

"Do you mean he has been murdered? Murdered here in my own house? One of my guests? Why we never can feel safe in our beds afterwards."

"The coroner's jury must decide whether it is a case of murder, Lord Bolton. I can only assure you it is not one of suicide."

"That is your opinion."

"It is more than an opinion, my lord. From the very nature of the wound it could not have been inflicted by himself."

Lord Bolton wrung his hands. He seemed utterly unmanned by the catastrophe. A knock came at the door.

"It is I," answered Edwin, to the question of "Who is there?" And he was allowed to join the conference.

"This is an awful tragedy, Captain Bolton," began the surgeon. "I have been recommending his lordship to send for the police."

Edwin recoiled at the very thought. He asked, hastily:

"Is that necessary?"

"They will be here before long, whether sent for or not; and, in my humble opinion Lord Bolton will be wise to summon them, the victim being his guest."

"Mr. Gresham is right, father," said Edwin, after an instant's reflection. "We had better send to Elchester at once."

It was impossible to keep the truth from Lady Bolton and her daughters; perhaps the peeress repented the caprice which had caused her to bring one almost a stranger to the castle. She said little, but Fanny and Meg had seldom seen their mother so moved. It was impossible, Lord Bolton judged, for the police to arrive that night, so the household retired early to seek such rest as might be their portion after the stirring events of the evening.

"Let us go to Alice," said Fanny Bolton to her sister, as they went upstairs. "She went to bed early, and it will be such a shock if she hears of this suddenly in the morning."

"She never cared about poor Mr. Gordon," said the future duchess, thoughtfully. "Alice has looked wretchedly ill all day. We had better not disturb her, Fanny."

"I think the very reason for her caring will be that she has always slighted him," answered Fanny, gently. "I must go to her, Meg. I could not bear for her to hear it suddenly."

"Give her my love," replied Meg, "and tell her not to have a headache to-morrow."

Fanny knocked softly at the door, but received no answer; she tried again with the same result, then she went softly in. A moment later she felt thankful Meg was not at her side.

In the same delicate evening dress she had worn at dinner, with the jewels yet on her neck and arms, the flowers still in her hair, knelt Alice Morton, motionless as a statue, save that her eyes had a hunted, frightened look statues do not possess, and there was on her face a look of suffering flesh and blood alone can know.

How awfully changed from the bright vision who had sat beside Fancy at dinner—the flowers had faded, the dress was disordered; to Fancy's horror there were deep red stains on it—stains of blood. For a moment she could not speak, then she said in a voice no one would have recognised, "Alice."

No answer—it almost seemed as though that kneeling figure would never speak again, so still and motionless was it.

"Alice, speak to me, it is I, Fancy, Alice—dear Alice, look at me and answer me."

She was no Pharisee; she loved this stricken girl as her sister. Appearances seemed to say a great guilt might fasten itself upon her, but Fancy was too tender to heed that; stooping down, she threw one arm round Alice—her own spotless dress touched that blood-stained one—she kissed her who might be guilty as lovingly as before. That kiss broke down the icy reserve and calm Alice had encased herself in. With a sharp cry she let her head nestle on Fancy's bosom, and put her icy hand in hers.

"Alice, what is the matter; I thought you would be in bed."

"No."

"Do you know, dear, what has happened?"

"Mr. Gordon is very ill, isn't he? Oh! Fancy, tell me quickly, I can bear it."

And Fancy, wondering at her deep interest in one she had always shunned, wondering yet more at the red stains on her dress, answered simply:

"He is dead!"

"I thought so. I prayed for freedom, but, oh, Fancy, I did not, I could not guess at what a cost it was to come."

"Alice, do you know you are talking very strangely; what had William Gordon to do with you; I thought you could not bear him."

Alice lifted her sad, shamed face up from Fancy's embrace, and said simply:

"I had promised to marry him, but it was long ago, and I did not know what I was doing. I hoped he would not look for me, but he found me out, and threatened to tell Lord Bolton. Fancy, from that day my life has been one living dread. I could not bear William Gordon, and yet by my own act I had given my fate into his hands. Even now, when I am horrified to hear of his death, through it all I feel a dim relief, for I am free, and it is only after bondage such as mine one knows what freedom is. Am I very wicked, Fancy?"

"No, darling, but tell me how did you hear about the accident; who told you?"

"I went to meet him, Fancy. He used to make me every now and then to show his power over me."

"And you found him dead."

"I found him senseless on the ground. He could not rise; he could not even speak. See, I am all covered with his blood. I wish he could have said that he forgave me; he did just press my hand. Fancy, I think I did it—I mean he took his life from love of me."

"No, dearest," answered Fancy, soothingly, "in no way were you to blame; you were doing all he asked; you were going to him."

And neither she nor Lady Alice dreamed it would enter into the heart of man to think that the murdered man's lost love caused his death, not remotely but actually, that her hand was the one which felled him to the ground. Alas! the morrow would undeceive them.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUSPECTED.

The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

TENNISON.

THE morning came, a dull, heavy day, the very atmosphere seemingly laden with the trouble in store for the castle.

Very early the police were on the spot of the tragedy. Later on Lord Bolton himself went there with the detective who had been hastily summoned from town.

"A nasty business, my lord?" said this individual, calmly.

"A fearful one to be hurried so suddenly out of life."

"I didn't mean that, Lord Bolton," said the man, respectfully but firmly. "I was thinking of them that's left, not of him that's gone."

"I do not understand you," replied the peer, a little helplessly.

"It's a clear case of murder, my lord. I never saw a clearer one."

"It seems impossible. Poor Gordon was almost a stranger at the castle. He can have had no enemies in the neighbourhood."

"I'm afraid not. This is a painful thing for you, my lord, but I am afraid it is there we must look for William Gordon's murderer."

And he pointed to the massive walls of the grand old castle just within their view.

"Would you suspect me," asked the baron, haughtily, "or my family?"

"There's more nor your family at the castle," my lord, replied the other, undaunted. "You have a large establishment of servants. Your house is full of guests. Can you be sure all these were friendly to the deceased?"

Lord Bolton writhed at the detective's question.

He was too proud to confess he knew so little of the murdered man as to ignore who had been his friends and who his foes.

He was very conscious of being in a false position. His wife had invited to the castle a young artist of whom he knew absolutely nothing, and now the man had been cruelly done to death in his own grounds, and on him seemed to fall the burden of bringing the guilt home to the true criminal.

"You will like to see my son," he observed, presently. "He was the first to discover this strange catastrophe."

Captain Bolton was sent for. He met his father and the detective in the library. Edwin would have done very much to avoid that interview.

He had no fears for himself. That they would suspect him of the crime never occurred to him. He grieved for the sake of one very dear to him, on whose name these inquiries might perhaps bring a breath of slander.

"This is a sad affair, Captain Bolton?" and it may here be remarked that the detective invariably opened the conversation with each fresh person by this observation.

"Very."

Edwin had resolved to say as little as possible.

"I am told you were the first to discover the crime. I should like to know all particulars."

"They are very simple," rejoined the young heir, gravely, and with no shadow of his usual indifference. "I was smoking a cigar in the grounds last evening when I heard the report of a pistol. Thinking it very strange, I struck a light and searched about until I thought of the arbour where you have been this morning. I found Gordon there lying on the ground in a pool of blood. I feel positive he was dead then."

"At what hour, Captain Bolton?"

"About ten minutes past nine. I cannot be certain to a second. It had struck nine before I heard the report, and I certainly was some minutes before I thought of the arbour. It must have been ten minutes after nine."

"Or more?"

"No, not more. I went very quickly."

"And when you found the unfortunate man was dead?"

"I went straight back to the castle and told my father what had happened."

"And this was?"

"A quarter to ten," replied Lord Bolton, to the great discomfiture of his son.

"A quarter to ten!" repeated the detective, as though he had not heard aright. "You are a slow walker, Captain Bolton?"

"I am not considered so," returned the captain, with all his father's hauteur. "But if I be I fail to see what concern it is of yours, or how it affects the question."

"Only this: Lord Bolton and I have just come

from the scene of the accident—to call it by a mild name. We did not hurry, and it took us just twelve minutes. After seeing such an awful spectacle as a guest whom you imagined hale and hearty and well lying dead a man would naturally make haste. You, however, took more than half an hour."

"He was dead," persisted Edwin. "Aid would have been quite useless."

"But it would have been more natural to have sought aid. Captain Bolton—forgive me if I pain you—what terms were you on with the murdered man?"

"There's no proof yet that he was murdered," persisted Edwin.

"With the dead man, then. I am afraid there is no doubt that he is dead."

"We met as ordinary acquaintances, I don't remember ever speaking half-a-dozen words with him."

There was a ring of deep feeling in the captain's voice. The detective knew the sound of truth when he heard it.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, politely; "but people will talk, and I should not have done my duty without asking you. I suppose this'll end just like all the other cases—there's a woman at the bottom of it."

"What woman?" demanded Lord Bolton, angrily. "It seems to me, Mr. Grimes, you are giving us all more trouble and anxiety than you need. Remember, if you please, Mr. Gordon was comparatively a stranger at the castle. Certainly he had not been there long enough for an *affaire de cœur*."

The detective showed not the least annoyance at Lord Bolton's anger. He smiled a curious smile, as men often do when they begin to see their way out of a dilemma.

"I have my own suspicions, Lord Bolton. Remember, to hunt out mysteries is my calling. It is not strange I should see a clue where you cannot."

"I fail to understand you."

"Father," interrupted Edwin, hastily, "we are making a mistake. However slight our acquaintance with poor Gordon, he was our guest. Our object ought to be to discover how he died, and we must not quarrel with Mr. Grimes because his idea as to the line of action differs from ours."

Lord Bolton saw the wisdom of the remark.

"I believe you are right in this, Edwin," he said.

Then to the detective:

"Mr. Grimes, you cannot doubt our anxiety to sift the matter to the bottom?"

"Would you give us your opinion?" put in Captain Bolton.

"Certainly. The case, gentlemen, lies in a nutshell. This Gordon had an enemy; these self-made fellows often do. The enemy obtained access to the castle, and there was an angry meeting. The clue fails here. You need to know something of the man's private life."

"He had no private life," spoke Lord Bolton, hastily. "If ever man lived their whole days before the world it was William Gordon. He had not a relation in the world."

"Was he married?"

"Certainly not."

"Was he a favourite with the ladies? Do you presume he had any private attachment?"

"I cannot say."

"Lord Bolton, I will speak very plainly. Do you think Mr. Gordon carried on any private intercourse with the ladies at the castle?"

"Certainly not."

"I must be frank with you. I had been to the arbour before I went there with you, Lord Bolton. I searched the ground round about. I found two things, and important things, too. One is the pistol Captain Bolton heard fired. I picked it up quite a hundred yards from the spot. We don't need a doctor to tell us now this was no case of suicide. Have you ever seen this weapon, gentlemen?"

And he held up the pistol, a small one, richly ornamented, looking more like a curious toy than a deadly implement of destruction.

"It is mine," replied Edwin, without a minute's hesitation. "I won it as a prize at

some amateur shooting match. You can see the inscription if you look."

"I have seen it," replied the detective, blandly; "you will understand the drift of my questions now. Do you mind telling me when it was last in your possession?"

"I had it yesterday. I fetched it from the gun-room to show to a friend in the afternoon."

"Taking care to replace it afterwards?"

"I think not. I believe I left it on the table. Stay, though, I mistake; I sent it back to the gun-room by a servant."

"The servant is above suspicion," hastily put in Lord Bolton.

"My lord, pardon me, but I must see him. Every word brings this case in a narrower compass. You will find that I was not wrong when I told you that it was in the castle we must look for the murderer."

Edwin rang a bell and sent for the servant, Charles Hopkins, a young man who had waited on him since he left college.

"Don't be alarmed," he said to him, with that good-natured manner few could resist. "This gentleman" (pointing to Grimes) "wishes to ask you a few questions."

"Captain Bolton gave you a pistol yesterday to carry back to the gun-room. About what time did it leave your hands?"

"I took it back to the gun-room myself, sir, about half-past seven."

"Was it loaded?"

"No, sir."

"What sort of a room is the gun-room?"

"It's a good size, sir."

"Any windows?"

"Two, sir."

"Would it be possible for any person to enter the room by them?"

The man smiled almost at the question.

"They are kept bolted, sir; besides, there's iron rails across. A cat couldn't get in that room, sir, much less a human being."

"I don't in the least suspect a cat of getting into the room, Mr. Hopkins. Whereabouts does it lie?"

"You had better go and look at it," interposed Captain Bolton.

"I will presently. Whereabouts does it lie?" he repeated, to the servant.

"In the east wing."

"And the servants' offices are in the west wing, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I suppose it would be quite impossible for anyone to enter by the garden and get into the gun-room without being seen by someone in the house?"

The servant thought a moment.

"Quite, sir; it's the last room in the house. Unless they came from upstairs and went down the grand staircase to get to the gun-room anyone must pass through the hall, and there is always a man there."

"You can go. Have the goodness not to mention our conversation to anyone, Mr. Hopkins. I am very much obliged to you."

And Mr. Hopkins departed thinking what an affable man was the great London detective, whilst Edwin Bolton felt angry with his favourite servant for not being as uncommunicative as himself.

"You will come and see the gun-room for yourself?"

"No, thank you, Lord Bolton; I don't need to see it. I think I see my way pretty clearly."

"You surely have not already fixed your suspicions on anyone?"

"I believe I have. The crime, according to Captain Bolton, was committed immediately after nine. William Gordon, you tell me, Lord Bolton, left the dining-room shortly after eight. We need concern ourselves only with that time. Between half-past seven and half-past eight the pistol must have been stolen from the gun-room. Between half-past eight and nine your unfortunate guest was done to death by it, and the gun-room being inaccessible from without, the guilty person must be beneath your own roof."

"This is fearful," cried Lord Bolton.

"Is it not true? Can you take exception at my argument?"

"Don't you see you would fix the crime on some one of my own friends?"

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"I must do my duty."

"I will not strive to hinder you," said Lord Bolton, coldly. "Do I understand you suspect my whole establishment, or only some particular member of it?"

"I suspect neither you nor your family, Lord Bolton. For the rest I should be too glad to be proved wrong."

"Mr. Grimes," said Edwin Bolton, with an anxiety he vainly strove to dissimulate, "you spoke of two links in the chain of evidence. You have shown us only one—the pistol. What is the other? It can hardly be so important, but it might throw light on the subject. I think my father has a right to ask to see it."

"I am too willing to show it to his lordship, since he can doubtless learn more from it than myself. It is a note—a tiny, almost illegible note—and it had fallen on the ground near the entrance to the harbour. Gordon must have been reading it before he went to keep the fatal appointment it contains."

He put a piece of crumpled paper into Lord Bolton's hands, and watched his face narrowly while he read it.

"I will meet you as you say, but it must be for the last time. Have you no pity that you make my whole life a weariness to me?"

"It is a woman's writing," said the peer, quickly, "and a disguised hand."

"Not intentionally disguised," corrected the detective; "that note was written by someone in great trouble. There must have been a secret in Gordon's life, and the woman who promised to meet him was connected with it."

"From this note she seems anxious to escape him. I should judge her to be the sufferer, not the sinner."

"Sufferers become sinners if too hardly pressed," returned the detective. "I would stake my reputation that that woman killed William Gordon."

"You have to find her first," said Edwin.

"She is not far off. The note simplifies things wonderfully. From the paper and writing its author must have been a lady. My lord, it is a cruel question, but duty knows no law. What lady guests have you staying at the castle?"

"I have no lady guest in the place except the Countess of Eston and Lady Pomfry. They are both mothers of families and my own esteemed friends."

"I have no need to see them. The woman I want is unmarried."

"All my lady guests are married."

"Are your two daughters absolutely the only young ladies staying at the castle?"

"No; there is my ward, Lady Alice Morton. But she has lived with me more than a year. I do not consider her as a guest."

"I have heard of her," said the detective, shortly; "they say she is the most beautiful woman in London. Lord Bolton, I must see your ward. Will you be present at the interview, or shall I go to her alone?"

(To be Continued.)

MONEY.

MONEY! money! money! Well may philosophers call it the root of all evil—whether it be represented by gold and silver or by bits of dirty paper. A piece of silver is at the bottom of almost every quarrel. For money, half the world seems willing to barter its integrity and honour. Even the best man goes about with a cloud on his brow if his purse is empty. And when you see a countenance black as night, folded arms and compressed lips, you may be sure that someone owes that man something. The lover of a year or two grows crabbed and crusty when his angel, now his wife, appeals to him for money for the grocer and the butcher.

Angelina, herself, sulks because the being with whom she could once have lived on kisses and moonbeams thinks two guineas too much for a Parisian bonnet. Relatives once tenderly attached quarrel and separate when the division of some small legacy becomes a subject of contention, and brothers "go to law" with each other for a few acres of land on which they lived together in childhood.

Without any of these things money—or the want of it—is a continual thorn in the side of half the world. How this bill shall be paid, and that thing bought—how strangers shall be impressed with no idea of any difficulties of the sort—how comfort and appearances can be kept up at the same time. Money! money! money! It is the torture of poor folks who have but little of it, and the bane of some who have had too much of it.

THE SURVIVORS;

OR,

John Grindem's Nephew.

CHAPTER X.

In the meantime, Captain Tobias and his new friends had assembled in the little "parlour" of the old gentleman's cabin, and were hopefully reviewing the situation.

"Of course, Grindem is not pleased," said the old captain. "You noticed the fact, I suppose?"

"How could we help noticing it?" returned Helen. "His wrath has clearly got the better of his discretion. He would kill us all in a minute, if he could!"

"I do not doubt it," confirmed our hero.

"The rascal is completely upset by finding himself blockaded. We shall have to watch him."

"And be prepared to give him a warm reception, if he endeavours to murder us during the night," added Captain Tobias. "I do not apprehend that he will proceed to extremities, however, until he has become somewhat acquainted with the island. He will need rest, too, after the uncomfortable day he has passed with his cocoanuts. Altogether, we can sleep soundly to-night. But every night hereafter one of us must be wide awake for his coming!"

As tired as they were with the events of the day, the trio did not retire until a late hour. There were a great many things to discuss, and especially a great many questions to ask. The old captain was curious about the great world to which he had so long been a stranger, and his young friends were equally interested in the experiences which had characterised his solitary existence.

The thoughts of our hero had resumed their wonted calm, and the vague visions of coming sleep had begun to take possession of his senses, when he was suddenly startled into an upright position by a strange cry from Captain Tobias. The thought provoked by that cry was, of course, a thought of Grindem.

"The villain has come to murder us!" ejaculated Albert, mentally.

In an instant he had dashed from the small room assigned him into the larger room—the principal apartment of the cabin—in which the old navigator had composed himself to slumber.

"What is the matter, sir?" cried Albert.

"It's another attack," panted Captain Tobias, groaning with pain. "A fit to which I am liable. Please stir up the fire, and put on a cone or two."

Albert hastened to comply. A cheerful blaze soon illuminated the apartment. By this time Helen had made her appearance. The young couple hung over the old captain in breathless agitation. His features were convulsed with pain.

"You'll find a sort of tea in the tin pail in the corner of the fireplace," he murmured. "Let me have a drink of it!"

The remedy was at once administered.

"These spells grow upon me," the sufferer panted, "coming oftener and lasting longer, as well as getting more severe. One of these days they will carry me off. I called you because I found myself unable to reach the fireplace and help myself to the remedy. But do not fret or worry. The crisis will soon pass. I have never been quite so helpless before. My solitary leg seems to have given out entirely."

The sorrow of the young couple at this sudden affliction was profound.

"Is there nothing else we can do for you?" asked Helen.

"Nothing, child, except to keep my remedy warm in the corner of the fireplace. I will take another dose in a few minutes. You see that I have a plenty of coverings, such as they are, to say nothing of the blankets you brought from the wreck. I shall soon feel better."

The result proved that the old navigator understood his case.

In the course of half an hour he had so far recovered from the attack as to dismiss the young couple from further attendance upon him.

"I am all right now," he said. "The coldness has left, and I am able to move again. I shall be all right in the morning. You had better get to bed and endeavour to sleep, for we shall have much to say and to do in the course of to-morrow!"

"I will stay a little while longer," said Albert. "I will call you, Miss Prescott, if there should be need of your assistance."

Helen addressed a few sympathetic remarks to Captain Tobias, and then withdrew to her apartment.

"I am sorry for the gloom I cause her," said the captain, when he found himself alone with Albert. "But she must have seen too much of life to suppose that we can always have things to our liking. How old are you, boy?"

"Nineteen, nearly. I was fifteen when I first went to sea, after Mr. Grindem's refusal to do anything for me, and was on my second voyage at the moment of the late disaster."

"You are a man, Albert, although a young one," said Captain Tobias, who seemed unusually serious and thoughtful. "I need not add that I like you. You are noble and generous, honest and truthful, and intelligent and capable. You are sure to make your way in the world, if you ever get back into it. What do you think of this fair young girl who has been thrown so strangely into our society?"

The face of Albert Graham became rosy at the question. A tender light beamed from his eyes.

"What could I think of her, Captain Tobias," he asked, in a gentle and caressing voice, "except that she is an angel?"

"Right, boy, right," said the old navigator, emphatically. "You would probably deem me an old idiot if I should tell you how completely that little thing has entwined herself about my heart during the brief time she has been here. How brave she is in her sorrow! How kind in her devotion!"

"She is everything good, sir, that you can possibly say about her!"

The old captain mused earnestly a few moments, and then said:

"I suppose you comprehend that the fate of this noble young girl is especially in your keeping, boy, and that you are her chief protector?"

"Yes, sir; and I bless Heaven for the kindness and honour!"

"Should anything happen to me, Albert, you will be left here alone with her," continued Captain Tobias. "There is no telling when you will be rescued. You may have to stay here a number of years, or to trust yourself to the wild hazards of another voyage in an open boat. But the one thing you are never to lose sight of is, that you are here to protect Miss Prescott from that terrible Grindem. You will have to be wary as a fox. That man means to get rid of

us in some way, and to seize the girl. I dare hope in Heaven's mercy, and in your ability to take care of Miss Prescott and yourself, but you will have to be very watchful!"

"He will certainly find us no easy prey," assured Albert. "I will even say that my interest in Miss Prescott is probably stronger than you imagine!"

A smile of contentment flitted over the pain-racked features of the sufferer.

"This is as it should be," he commented. "Go to bed now, boy. I can call you at any moment, you know, if I should have need of your presence."

The night passed without further alarm or incident.

The new day had not yet fairly come when Captain Tobias was heard stumping about as lively as ever. Albert hastened to join him.

"You see that I'm all right again, as promised," he cried, cheerfully extending his hand. "I have been thinking over my case, and have come to the conclusion that I have been eating too many of the sea-birds that prowl about the island. If the coconuts take a poison from the soil why shouldn't the birds from the various seeds and things they eat? I am going to eat more fish hereafter. The young sharks are good eating—some portions of them—and there are various kinds of shell-fish worthy of attention. What I probably need is a change of diet. This seems to me a reasonable explanation of those foolish spasms."

"It certainly can do no harm to make the experiment," said Albert. "And since we have plenty of leisure to cultivate eating as one of the fine arts let's organise our table upon that basis."

Helen soon joined the two men, very much relieved and gratified at finding Captain Tobias so well and cheerful.

"You seem as bright-eyed as ever, Miss Prescott," said the old navigator, kindly. "You must have slept, after all."

"Yes, sir, I did," returned Helen. "I have been thinking more than an hour what I can do to render our existence here more palatable."

The good-natured navigator exchanged significant glances with Albert.

"You see how we are all thinking alike?" he cried. "If Mr. Grindem will let us alone, we will see how many dishes of wholesome food are afforded by these few square miles of island."

"Including a few additional miles of the waters around us," amended Helen. "The rain has begun, I see. How long will it last, Captain Tobias?"

"Probably two or three days. But it shall not prevent us from getting out of doors. There is a singular cave in the island that I propose to show you after breakfast."

"A cave?" exclaimed Helen. "How romantic!"

"And there is many a romance connected with it," said the old captain. "I discovered it quite by accident, and spent several months by odd spells in exploring its various ramifications. I found in it numerous dungeons, with more than a dozen skeletons, and various chains and weapons, to say nothing of a large hoard of buried treasure."

"Why, this sounds like a fairy tale!" murmured Helen. "You make me eager for the promised visit!"

"I am equally eager to tell you all about it," declared Captain Tobias. "The treasure in question belongs to me by right of discovery, and I am going to make you two young people my heirs. I have been bothered just enough by my spasms to be reminded that even a man who has a whole island to himself cannot hope to live for ever. And since it has pleased Him—the old navigator uncovered his head reverently—to bless my old eyes with the presence of two such charming companions, I am resolved to do all I can to make you happy in the future, in case you are ever able to make your escape from this island!"

"How good you are, Captain Tobias!" mur-

mured Helen, her face wreathed in smiles, while her eyes filled with tears. "You remind me every moment of my poor father!"

"Well, I am sure that the more I resemble him the better! And now to the business of the day!"

Breakfast having been duly disposed of, Captain Tobias brought to each of his young friends a vast garment of feathers.

"These are my rain-shedders," he announced, smiling. "Beneath one of these things you are as safe from the wet as a duck under its original cover. They are equal to a regular thatch. As soon as you are stowed away in them we'll set forth upon our explorations."

A few minutes later the trio were on their way to the cave mentioned.

Half an hour thereafter, they were at the entrance.

"Here we are!" announced the captain.

The opening was small, but it was soon evident that the cavern was a large one. It was situated beneath one of the largest central hills of the island, and was approached through a long ravine in which dashed and plunged a considerable torrent.

"I have brought plenty of torches, you see," continued Captain Tobias, proceeding to unroll a bundle with which Albert had been charged. "All you have to do is to keep at my heels, and to do as you see me doing."

It was an exciting moment for the young couple as the old navigator led the way into the opening.

"You will, of course, stick to Mr. Graham very closely, Miss Prescott," said Captain Tobias, after a brief advance, as he noticed the girl's nervousness. "You had better take his arm, and be lighted and guided by him."

The advice struck both of the young people as entirely worthy of acceptance.

"It is a strange scene that is opening before us," observed Captain Tobias, as soon as the trio were fairly within the cavern. "The old buccaneers must have had great times here some two or three hundred years ago. What terrible tragedies have taken place here no man can ever fully imagine."

The passage by which the trio had entered had now enlarged into a vast space larger than the interior of an ordinary church. From this central space a great number of passages radiated in every direction, affording many a dark niche, and many a hiding-place.

"I will first show you the great central cavern," said the captain, "and then the prisons, and afterwards the various separate apartments."

A full hour was spent in these explorations, and then the old navigator turned to his companions.

"The skeletons you have seen," he declared, "are doubtless the skeletons of prisoners who, for some reason or another, were left here to die. They may have been the crew of some ship which had been sent in pursuit of the pirates, and which were so unfortunate as to fall into their hands. Be that as it may, the fact that there are chains attached to many of the skeletons attests that the victims were prisoners."

These sights and scenes and reflections were naturally of a kind to render the visitors thoughtful.

With such relics before them, they had no difficulty in conjuring up to their mental gaze the persons by whom these gloomy recesses had once been peopled, or the scenes which had once here been presented.

"I have saved the gem for the last," resumed Captain Tobias. "Come with me now, children"—he had called the young couple children repeatedly without noticing the fact—"and I will show you the strong-box of the pirates. They do not seem to have had any treasurer. At least, the treasure has not been embzzled or abstracted."

Leading the way along one of the lowest and innermost corridors, the old navigator came to a halt in a rocky chamber about eight yards square, with an average height of ten or twelve feet.

"Here's a sight for you!" he cried, flashing the rays of his torch around him.

It was, indeed!

The floor of the rocky chamber was literally covered with gold and silver coins, among which were various gleaming bars of bullion.

"We must take good care not to be watched and followed by Grindam," said the captain. "If that man were to set eyes upon these treasures he would have another great reason for murdering us!"

A sound of footsteps succeeded—then the sounds of a stumble.

A man has missed his footing at the entrance of the rocky chamber and pitched headlong into the midst of the explorers.

With an oath this man regained his feet, glaring around him.

He was John Grindam!

The stealthy rascal had witnessed the entire exploration of the cavern.

(To be Continued.)

THE ELEPHANTS LOVED TO BE FED.

A SENTINEL belonging to the menagerie at Paris, anxious to discharge his duty, was extremely vigilant, every time he mounted guard near the elephants, to prevent the spectators from supplying them with casual food. This conduct was not much calculated to procure him the friendship of those sagacious animals. The female in particular beheld him with a very jealous eye, and had several times endeavoured to correct his officious interference, by besprinkling him with water from her trunk.

One day when a great number of people were collected to view these noble quadrupeds, the opportunity seemed convenient for receiving, unnoticed, a small piece of bread; but the rigorous sentinel happened then to be on duty. The female, however, placed herself before him, watched all his gestures, and the moment he opened his mouth to give the usual admonitions to the spectators, discharged a stream of water full in his face. A general laugh ensued, and the sentinel having wiped himself, stood a little on one side, and continued his vigilance.

Soon after he had occasion to repeat his charge to the company, not to give anything to the elephants; but no sooner had he uttered the words than the female laid hold of his musket, twisted it round her trunk, trod it under foot, and did not restore it till she had twisted it into the form of a corkscrew. Whether this put a stop to his officiousness we are not informed; but it probably taught him more caution in coming within the reach of an animal whose natural appetites he was disposed unnecessarily to control.

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER.

Man may at first transgress, but next do well;
Vice doth in some but lodge a while, not dwell.

HERRICK.

KATIE JESSOP could not sleep that night, and when, at last, after lying for hours awake, she fell into a troubled slumber, the dreams which visited her pillow were so repulsive and horrible that she started up in affright as though some terrible danger threatened her.

The grey dawn, which was stealing into the room when she closed her eyes in slumber, had given place to sunlight, and the country-bred girl sprang out of bed, and, determined to drive the painful ideas suggested by her dreams from her, she hastily bathed and dressed, and then all

aglow with health and youthful activity, took her hat and cloak, slipped downstairs, gently unfastened the front door, and went out for a brisk walk over the common towards the river.

A town-bred girl would have shuddered at such a strange proceeding as a walk at five o'clock in the morning, and alone, too.

But Katie thought nothing of it. It was what she would have done at Great Barmouth as a matter of course, and now she walked along with a light, fearless step, innocent of evil as she was ignorant of danger.

She wondered over many things. Why did Amy Garland dislike her so much? She could find no answer to the question, she was too humble, too unconscious of her own fascinations to ascribe the enmity the colonel's niece bore her to jealousy, which was its true source.

On the contrary she feared she might unconsciously have done something to vex and annoy her, and she regretted it for many reasons, perhaps not the least among them being that but for Amy's animosity she would have been invited to join the Garlands on their visit to the Continent.

"And I should so like to travel," she said, with a sigh, looking with the longing eyes of youth over the grass-covered common, the placid river and well kept lawns and flower gardens, which came down to the water's edge on the opposite bank, and wondering if distant towns and cities that she had only read of were so very unlike the places she had seen. "It would do me so much good to travel. I should have so much more to write about," she thought.

But the thought was expressed aloud, and the next instant an unexpected answer came to it, for a man sprang up, as it seemed, from the very earth at her feet, and exclaimed:

"Miss Jessop—Katie! Fly with me, and we will traverse the world together!"

For a second, with surprise and alarm, the girl was dumb; nay, she almost thought a nightmare such as she had risen so early to escape had seized upon her mind and senses, and she instinctively stretched out her hand and caught hold of the trunk of a tree for support.

The river flowed close by; not a human being save this man who spoke to her was in sight, and fear and indignation combined to make her silent, though her dilated eyes must have expressed her horror.

"Katie, my beautiful, I have adored you from the first moment our eyes met. Say you love me! Let us fly to some brighter and happier clime, where all that stands between us and perfect bliss may be forgotten."

And he was about to approach her, but desperation and terror gave the girl fictitious courage, and she said in a tone of amazed contempt:

"Mr. Fretwell, are you mad? Where is your wife and your child, and how dare you insult me like this?"

"The vixen!" he returned, spitefully, "wife, you call her? she d— would be nearer the mark. Your name is on her lips morning, noon, and night. She is jealous of you, and she has cause to be. But she can't live long, and directly she's dead I'll marry you—I will, 'pon my honour."

Katie could scarcely restrain a sneer from being expressed in her face when this exemplary husband talked of his "honour," but she was too sensible of her perilous position to irritate him rashly, so she said, with as much calmness as she could command:

"You are quite mistaken, Mr. Fretwell, in supposing I have the slightest preference for you. When a man is married he might just as well be buried as far as I am concerned. I could no more fall in love with a married man, knowing him to be so, than I could walk across this river without wetting my shoes. If you are wise, for the sake of your wife's happiness as well as your own, you will go back to her and your dear little baby, and make her as happy as you can."

Mr. Fretwell was taken aback. He had hitherto considered himself irresistible, and his injudicious and jealous wife had so harped upon

and taunted him with his admiration for Katie Jessop, and the girl's presumed love for him, that without stopping too closely to inquire into or analyse the truth of the reproach he had taken it for granted.

Thus after the lapse of a week or more during which his wife and he had occupied separate rooms, Mr. Fretwell had started off early this morning to cool the restless fever in his blood, perhaps also with the vague hope of meeting the girl whose name his scolding wife was so often flinging at him.

That he was prepared to throw up everything and elope with Katie was quite true, but I very greatly doubt whether he cared much for her; beyond his admiration for her beauty, and his paltry desire to torment his wife, whom he was beginning to hate, he had no very strong feeling in the matter. But there were other motives that conduced to bring him here with such a proposal to Katie Jessop this morning.

A distant relative had just left him three hundred pounds. One third of this legacy he had determined to spend in travelling about and seeing the world, and what more pleasant companion could he have than pretty Katie, thought he.

He was ambitious, too. The schoolroom was too narrow and confined a sphere for his energies; he had read some of Katie's literary productions, and his mind had been fired to imitate her. He would throw away the pedagogue's ferrule for the author's pen, and he dreamed that he and she working together would one day attain distinction, wealth, and fame.

So he had argued, ignoring his wife's existence in all his schemes and plans, and now, as he stood looking at Katie, and saw how resolute her beautiful face had become, he felt as though he had received a sudden blow. His airy castles melted away as a light mist vanishes before the sun, and he stood looking helpless and dejected before the girl who told him that his marriage was an insuperable obstacle to her ever bestowing a tender thought upon him.

Most men would have taken the girl's decision as final, and, to a certain extent, the schoolmaster did so, but this was a weak, vain man, and he wanted some salve to his self love to make his rejection lighter and more bearable and he said:

"I am very sorry you should have such strong opinions about marriage; it is scarcely usual, though I respect you all the more for it. But would there have been hope for me? Could you have loved me had I been free and this fatal bond had not tied me?"

For a moment Katie hesitated. Perhaps it would not be safe to tell him the truth; then, feeling she must annihilate the possibility of the repetition of this scene, she said, positively, while her cheeks became crimson:

"No, I could never have loved you. Before I came to this place or ever saw you I had met the only man who could make me feel any warmer affection than that of a sister for a brother. Now I have told you this love is not at my command, and if you care for my esteem or friendship you will go back to your wife and make her happy."

"All very fine, but she wearies me with her absurd jealousy. Your name is always on her tongue. It was she who made me believe you loved me."

"Convince her to the contrary, and prove to her by your devotion what a great wrong she is doing both of us by her suspicions; and now go away, please. I came here to be alone, and to think and to bear my own trials with what fortitude I can. I am not strong enough to carry yours also. Go away, please; leave me."

"May I kiss your hand and swear to devote myself to your service if ever you need a friend?" he asked, in a tone that was sincere enough, though his evident desire to be dramatic and high flown spoiled the sentiment that would otherwise have been well expressed.

"No," positively. "Go and kiss your wife and your child, and forget that I exist. Your duty and devotion should belong to them. Good morning."

And she turned and walked away, still keeping by the side of the river.

For a few seconds Willie Fretwell stood silent and astonished, then he turned suddenly upon his heel. Pursuit of this girl was useless, and she was right. His wife and child had the first claims upon him. He would make one more effort to conciliate the woman whom he had promised to love and cherish, and if that failed the consequences must be on her own head, and he would go his own way through life free from all ties or responsibility.

So he thought as he turned his face homewards, while Katie continued her walk in an opposite direction without once turning back to look after him.

She had not proceeded many steps, however, before a rustling in the grass, a light footstep on the gravel path, and a touch on her shoulder made her pause and turn round in sudden apprehension.

"Lottie!" she gasped.

"Yes, it's me, miss," was the unblushing retort, and the girl struck her hands on her hips in a partially aggressive attitude as she said:

"I have been watching you, Miss Jessop, and hearing all you and master have been talking about, and I'm proud of you and you're a credit to your sex, that's what you are."

"Listening and watching! I don't understand you," said our heroine, with an involuntary expression of repugnance.

"Well, you are uncommon green," was the unabashed reply; "but this is how things stand. The missus is jealous of you and her husband, and she set me to watch him. He came out this morning and I followed him. I hid down behind the bushes, and you see how wet I am with the dew, but I'm glad I heard what I did; it will set things all right, at least, I hope so. She's got a tile lose, has Mrs. Fretwell, and if she don't go quite off her chump 'twill be because of the good news I bring her."

"Off her chump! what is that? queried Katie, in amazement.

"Out of her mind. She thinks every woman wants to rob her of the precious beauty you've just been talking to. Lor bless you! she was jealous of me until I showed her I'd got a young man of my own."

Katie felt sick and angry at such pitiful pettiness, but she said, in as friendly a tone as she could assume:

"I am surprised at your playing the part of spy, Lottie, but now I hope you are satisfied that I have nothing to do with the family squabbles of Mr. and Mrs. Fretwell. I left the school on account of her absurd jealousy, and now I must be followed here."

"Ah! and a nice tale she made up about your going away with him one night, a week before you left. It did look black, I own, for you didn't sleep at the house with us that night."

"No; I slept at Mrs. Chater's."

"Did you now?"

"Go and inquire if you like; but such infamous suspicions are intolerable."

"Well, I don't suspect you, so don't get cross with me; but take my advice. Don't go out of the house alone, and if Mrs. Fretwell comes to see you let the servant say you're not at home. She means you mischief, and she doesn't much care how she does it, but you've got a friend in me, though I have been spying upon you, and I hope you'll admit one day I've done you more good than most of them. But I'm off, good bye," and with a nod of the head Lottie turned on her heels and was soon hurrying back to the school-house as fast as her long legs could carry her.

"What can they all mean by it?" thought Katie, helplessly. "I have given no cause for this man's love or his wife's jealousy. Oh, I wish I was well away from it! I feel a terrible depression as though the worst had not yet come."

Nor had it, though even Katie's fears and dark presentiments could not equal in horror the reality that was soon to burst upon her.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GROWN DESPERATE.

The withered frame, the ruin'd mind,
The wreck by passion left behind;
A shiver'd scroll, a scattered leaf,
Scared by the autumn blast of grief. BROW.

"You're sure you heard every word they said, Lottie?"

The speaker was Mrs. Fretwell, and she rocked the child in her arms backwards and forwards in a peculiarly restless manner, while her large green grey eyes had a rolling tigerish glance in them, which alone should have excited doubts of her sanity.

"Yes, ma'am, every word. She was frightened and surprised to see him, and she did speak up bravely for you, I must say."

"The vile hypocrite; she steals my husband's heart away from me, and then pretends she didn't want him. You heard him swear that he loved her, didn't you?"

"Well, something like it, ma'am," reluctantly.

"Ah! you're trying to take her part, are you; and his too; perhaps you think he'll marry you when I'm gone. Ah, but I'll leave such a tale behind as shall blight and wither them both and all of you. I'll strike you from my grave with more power than I can ever wield in life."

And the speaker rocked herself and her whimpering babe backwards and forwards with a slow, monotonous movement, which though quiet, yet had something wild about it.

At this moment her husband entered the room. Some feeling of compunction and shame had been roused in his heart by Katie's words, and though he could not but contrast the two, greatly to his wife's disadvantage, he determined to be cheerful and amiable and try to bring back some of the confidence and love that had once existed between them.

To do him justice, for so vain and weak-minded a man, the effort had something heroic in it; for his wife's insane jealousy had led her to say things to him which he could never quite forget, and there was something in her personal appearance at this moment that was positively repulsive even to his not very fastidious taste.

Never really pretty, and owing what few charms she possessed to the neatness of her dress and genteel though thin and bony figure, Mrs. Fretwell, with the duties and dignity of marriage, had cast aside or disdained to use the little arts she had once so assiduously cultivated until, from being a picture of all that was orderly and prim, she was now, eighteen months after marriage, a sloven; by no means clean, with a pinched face, hollow cheeks, and big, staring eyes that ought to have warned those around her to take care she was never left alone.

"You are not looking well, my dear," said her husband, as he came near her.

A sneer was the prelude to the retort.

"And much you care."

"You shouldn't say that," mildly. "I think you'd better go out of town for a while. Now the holidays have commenced we can get away very well, and my uncle's legacy will come in useful. I have sent in my resignation and yours, so that by the end of the vacation Mrs. Chater can have filled our places."

"What legacy? What's to become of us?"

"Didn't I tell you? Three hundred pounds has been left me. I can't get it all at present, but the lawyers offered to advance me part of it, so we will go to the seaside till you and the boy get strong, then we will make our plans for the future."

"Ah!" with a mocking grin. "Katie Jessop told you to come and say all this to me, didn't she? I'm to be got out of the way while you two pursue your shameless course as you like."

The man recoiled as though he had been struck, and his face became white and livid with passion as he said:

"Never mention that girl's name again. You have to thank her for my being here now. If

you like to behave decently I will be as good a husband to you as I can; but if you use Miss Jessop's name in connection with me or anything that is wrong I will leave you and never speak to you again while I live."

Any woman in her senses, even had she possessed just cause for complaint, would have been silent or have spoken of something else, knowing it is not wise to goad an angry man, particularly when he believes he is in the right.

But Mrs. Fretwell had no such wisdom, and her next observation was one so wanting in delicacy and modesty, and when applied to poor innocent Katie, so utterly inconsistent with truth, that Lottie, who had been present during the whole of this interview, covered her ears with horror, and Fretwell himself stood still for a moment like a man turned suddenly to stone.

Slowly recovering himself after a few seconds the man started at the woman who had thus outraged all sense of decency by her violent language, next looked lingeringly around the room as though taking a last farewell of each familiar object, then, without another word, he turned sadly away and left the room.

His wife made no effort to stop him, but Lottie, who saw some expression on his face that frightened her, rushed out, and just overtook him as he was about to leave the house.

"Don't go away," she pleaded, "she doesn't know what she says, I'm sure she doesn't. It's my belief," she added, in an undertone, "she's mad, and she means mischief. I feel sure she does. Don't go away; do stay, if only for the baby's sake."

But her pleading was useless. Another time it might not have been so. Now the man was desperate and reckless. He had been taking himself to task before he entered his wife's presence. Katie's words had aroused what little sense of chivalry there was in his nature, and he had come to his wife ready to be friends, ready to bear and forbear, and to fight the battle of life by her side as steadfastly and lovingly as he could, and this was his reward.

What wonder that the feelings of duty which had brought him thus far deserted him after such a reception; his wife had everything to gain by conciliating him, now it was clear he had nothing to lose by leaving her. He would arrange with the lawyer—who had informed him of the legacy and offered to make him an advance—to pay his wife a pound a week, that she should always have, and with it her claims upon him should cease.

So he thought bitterly as he resisted Lottie's appeal, and started for London that never-to-be-forgotten morning, and without waiting to let his purpose cool, directly he reached Waterloo Station he called a Hansom cab, and drove direct to the lawyers.

Six hours later a letter addressed to Miss Lottie Bircham, enclosing another missive, was delivered at the schoolhouse at Deadlake.

The enclosure, which was open, was from the lawyer to Mrs. Fretwell, informing her of the provision made for her maintenance by her husband; a needless act, though that was a fact he had yet to learn.

His note to Lottie contained but a few words. He asked her to pack up certain things he mentioned, and send to him, to give his wife the lawyer's letter, and inform her that she would never see or hear directly from him again.

Such was the double missive the postman brought to the little house attached to the school, and this is what had happened there before it arrived.

When Lottie slowly and reluctantly returned to the sitting-room where she had left Mrs. Fretwell and the baby, she found the mother sitting at a table, with the child in her lap, while she was writing what seemed to be a letter, if one might judge by the size of the paper.

"Shall I take the baby, ma'am?" asked the girl, approaching her.

"No; go away; don't touch him," was the sharp response.

"Do you want anything, ma'am, before I go away?" was the next question.

A still more curt reply in the negative, and



[MR. FRETWELL'S OFFER.]

then Lottie, who was a pupil teacher, and not a servant, and who waited on the Fretwell's partly for the small gratuity that helped to buy some of her clothes, and principally from habit because she liked them, feeling weary and a trifle uncomfortable at the turn matters were taking in this household, caught up her hat and ran across the yard to the other small house, which was more properly her home.

It was not often that Lottie sought old Sue's company for a chat.

She knew that all she said, with various additions and comments, would be carried to Mrs. Chater, and this made her cautious and distrustful of the old woman; but her anxiety this morning and a vague feeling of responsibility carried her beyond any other consideration, and she walked into the kitchen where the old woman sat smoking her morning pipe and said:

"Mrs. Fretwell's rather queer this morning, Sue."

"Is she ever anything but queer?" was the placid retort.

"Well, whatever she is mostly, she's worse to-day."

Puff, puff, went the pipe between the old woman's lips for a second or two, then she took it out slowly, blew a great cloud of smoke, and asked:

"What's the row now? Have they been at it again?"

"Yes, and I don't think she's quite right here," and the girl touched her forehead significantly.

"Why, what's she been up to now?"

"She's so wild and violent. She's drove master out of the house. He came and told her he'd had some money left him, and he'd take her to the seaside, and that he'd given notice to leave here, and he'd take care of her and get her strong and well again, and instead of being pleased as most wives would be, she raved at him and called him names till she roused him so he said if she spoke like that again he'd go away and never come back again. And she went on worse than ever, and he

kept his word; he went off, and you may make sure he'll never come to Deadlake again."

"Bah!" returned the old woman, with a sneer, "he ain't got the pluck of a sparrow."

"I don't know," said Lottie, doubtfully. "I've heard a worm will turn, and you see he's got money."

"Well, that's one reason surely. What's she doing now?"

"Scribbling away at a furious rate, but I don't think she knows what she's about. I wanted her to let me nurse the child, but she wouldn't."

"You've no need to cry over that. She's jealous again, I suppose?"

"I don't know; she's jealous of everybody and everything. I don't make her out."

"She's got over her fit about Miss Jessop, I s'pose?"

"She ought to. I don't know, she talks such rubbish. I wish you'd come over and see her, Sue, and stay with her a bit."

"Not I; she'd only insult me, and ask what mischief I'd come to do. I know her of old."

"Mind your own business, Sue, and leave me to take care of my own," she says to me one day, and that's just what I mean to do."

"I'll tell her I asked you to come because she wasn't well," urged Lottie.

But the old woman shook her head; she was not to be persuaded. Her own comfortable kitchen was much more pleasant than Mrs. Fretwell's parlour, and beyond this, Sue felt assured that the schoolmistress was only suffering from a fit of temper.

So she resisted all Lottie's arguments, and advised her to leave "the cross, ill-tempered thing" alone.

Not quite at ease on the subject, the girl hesitated, but not knowing what to do, having no one else to appeal to or advise her, the other teachers having gone home for their holidays, Lottie sought her own room and tried to interest herself in a book she had already partly read.

She could not do so, however. Try as she would to drive it from her mind, Mrs. Fretwell's face, as she had seen it that morning, would haunt her, while her conscience seemed to urge that let her be as bad tempered as she would it was not right or kind to leave a woman who was not well with her baby alone. Till at last, unable to bear the worry of mind any longer, Lottie rose to her feet, flung down the book, and ran across the yard to the opposite house.

How silent all was, and what a singular smell of bitter almonds seemed to greet her as she opened the door of the little parlour and hurriedly entered the room.

It was empty!

On the table, however, lay a letter, bulky, and sealed with black; it was not addressed to anyone, but there were these strange words on the envelope:

"Why I did it!"

Lottie read these four words over and over again.

Something tragic had happened she was sure, though what, for the moment, she could not even surmise, but Mrs. Fretwell must have gone away in some manner or other, and this letter without doubt contained the accusing shaft she had threatened to aim at so many even from her grave.

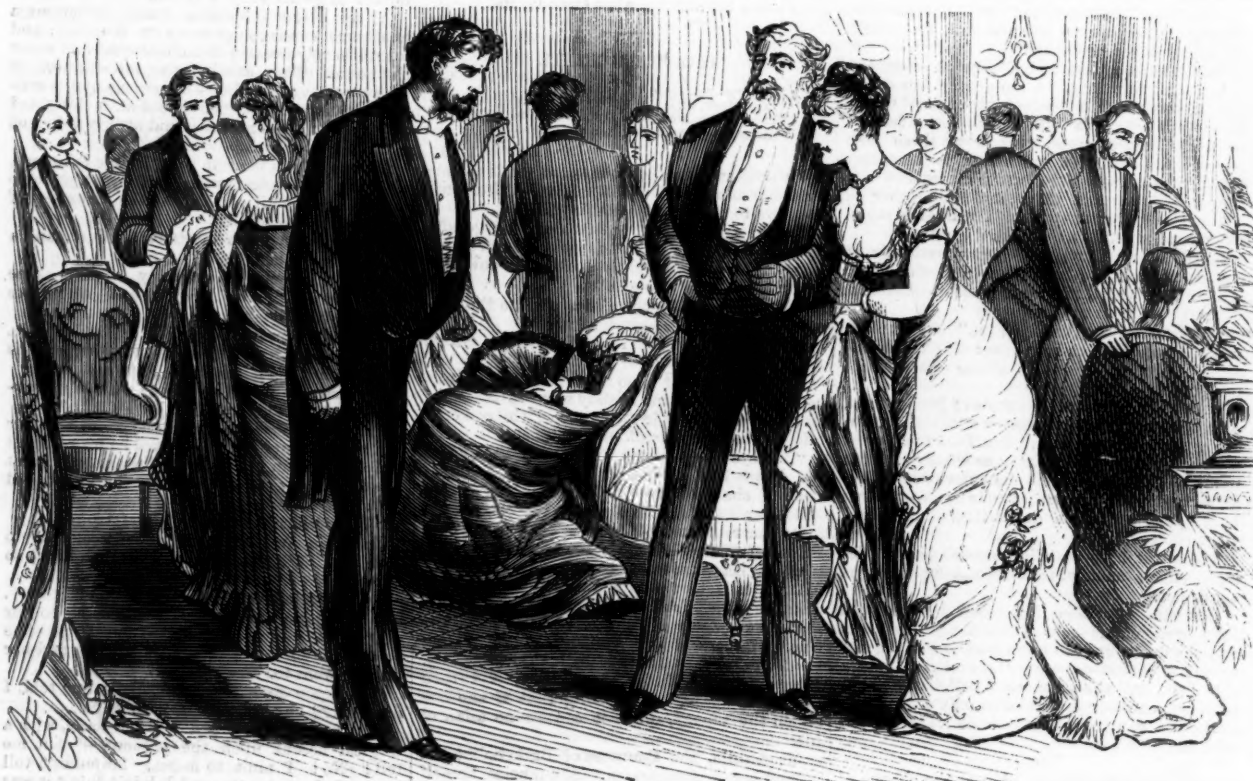
"Who knows what she may have said about poor Katie and him and me too for that matter? I'll keep it myself, and I'll burn it the first chance without even reading it if I can. She was mad as a March hare. Where can she have gone? Hark!"

She listened!

Yes, there could be no mistake. A groan came from the room above that in which she was standing, and at that moment something dripped upon the table, and glancing up to the ceiling the girl saw with horror that the liquid which was oozing down from the room overhead, making dark stains as it came, was—blood!

Yes, that was what it was: human blood, and now it was almost falling upon her.

(To be Continued.)



[THE COUNTESS OF BRAKEHOLME'S RECEPTION.]

"MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED ROSE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sinned Against: Not Sinning," &c.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste their sweetness on the desert air.

GRAY.

JANE MASON discreetly keeps out of the Countess of Brakeholme's way as soon as she hears the latter come upstairs from the dining-room and enter her bedroom. She knows her ladyship is going to keep her appointment with Isola Marbourne, and Jane Mason, to avoid any suspicion being aroused in her mistress's mind, keeps carefully in the background, determined not to put any obstacle in her way.

The countess calls the first cab she can see, and hastily drives to the place mentioned by Isola Marbourne.

The West-end cabman pretends to have some difficulty in finding the address, and the Countess of Brakeholme is ignominiously obliged to get out of the vehicle and to hunt for the number herself.

At length she finds the house; and the slipshod, draggie-tailed servant informs her that the persons she has inquired for have left the place.

"Are you sure of it?" the Countess of Brakeholme asks, with some amount of apprehension and incredulity.

"Law! Yes, 'm!" ejaculates the girl, in the shrill, high-pitched voice of the London lower-class servant.

"Why, Miss Pierce" (such was the fictitious

name assumed by Isola Marbourne), "Miss Pierce," she continues, appointed to meet me this evening. You must make a mistake, some other lodger, perhaps, has left, and you have mistaken her for Miss Pierce."

"Indeed, no, 'm!" replies the girl, civilly enough. "Miss Pierce and her brother went off with the two gentlemen yesterday evening."

The countess listens with amazement.

"With two gentlemen," she repeats. "Why—had Miss Pierce and her brother many visitors?"

"No, 'm. They had no visitors at all until one gentleman came and then he sent me for the other."

"Do you know who they were?"

The girl hesitates, and the Countess of Brakeholme follows up her advantage by saying:

"My good girl, I am much interested in Miss Pierce and her brother. They are some sort of connections of mine, and I was greatly shocked to hear they were in such distress. I want to relieve them—to do something for them—which is my reason for coming here so late this evening. Tell me all about them. Who were those gentlemen who came here to see Miss Pierce?"

"Well 'm—I can't exactly tell you."

"Why?"

"Because, as how I promised the gentleman that came first, as how I wouldn't say anything about what happened."

"I should be sorry to make you, or to ask you to, break a promise," says Geraldine, Countess of Brakeholme, with beautiful conscientiousness in her grave tones; "but as I have serious doubts that these gentlemen were acting for the benefit of my relatives, I think therefore that you had better tell me who they were."

Matilda Jane thinks of the two bright golden sovereigns which Clement Woodleigh had given her, and which had already in her mind's eye resolved themselves into a smart costume and a stylish hat, wherewith to captivate the young man in the cornchandler's at the corner—and

she does not like to tell, since she has given her promise not to do so.

She is an ignorant, but shrewd, girl. She has no especially fine feelings about honour; honesty is to her somewhat an abstract quality, for she refrains from stealing, chiefly from her fear of being taken before "the beak," and being, possibly, committed to prison, so that when she hesitates to tell her questioner all she would know, it is less from any clearly defined feeling of honour than from a hazy sort of conception, that as she has been paid not to say anything, therefore it is just as well for her not to do so, for fear of getting into any trouble.

"I can't, 'm," says Matilda, shaking her shock head; "leastways I mustn't."

"Did you promise you would not tell under any circumstances?"

"I don't know as how I did," responds Matilda, doubtfully, and not quite understanding the drift of the countess's question.

"You can at least tell me what the gentlemen were like," Geraldine suggests.

"Oh, yes, 'm," replies Matilda, with alacrity, "the gen'lman as come first, he were very handsome."

"Tell me exactly what he was like."

"He had black hair, and a black beard, and black eyes," says Matilda, enthusiastically, the painter's appearance and manner having made an impression upon her susceptible heart, "and he was very tall," she continues, "and had white hands, and a velvet coat, and a voice like music."

Something instinctively tells the Countess of Brakeholme that Matilda is trying to describe Clement Woodleigh.

"And the other gentleman," she says, calmly, "what was he like?"

"Not as nice as the first," replies Matilda, disparagingly, "he was old and had hair nearly grey."

"You went for him?" says Geraldine, questioningly.

"Yes, 'm."

"In what direction did you go to find him?" "Oh, I can't tell that, 'm!" exclaims Matilda, fearing that even now she has said too much. "I can't tell you any more."

"Look here, my good girl," says the countess, in a conciliatory tone, "I am deeply interested in, and very much concerned about, my unfortunate relatives. It will be much better for you to tell all about them. I believe these men were not friendly to them, and it is necessary that I should know all about them, and where they have taken Miss Pierce and her brother to. Tell me what you know, and I will give you a five pound note."

Matilda Jane starts, and peers curiously at the countess in the dim light. But the latter is too closely veiled for her to detect her features distinctly.

"That's a lot of money, 'm," she replies, meditatively; "but why ever didn't someone come before and give Miss Pierce some money, for she wanted it bad."

"Ah!" exclaims the Countess of Brakeholme, with a sigh, "unfortunately we did not know of the state they were in. But I am in a hurry, my good girl, so tell me at once what you mean to do. Will you give me the information I require, and take the five pounds for it, or must I take you before the authorities and compel you to do so?"

The latter high-sounding speech has the desired effect, namely, that of making the girl speak out.

But she has been impressed by the good looks and genial tones of Clement Woodleigh, and she determines to be as true to her promise to him as circumstances will permit.

"Well, 'm," she says, with well-assumed apprehensiveness, "you see I'm only a poor girl, as doesn't want to get into trouble, so I'll tell all I can."

"Yes."

Geraldine's heart beats high at the chance of tracking out the fugitives and carrying out her nefarious designs.

"The gentleman as came first, then," continues Matilda, "he sent me for the other gen'l'man, and that one, he came and took Miss Pierce and the old gen'l'man away."

"Yes, yes! I know all that!" exclaims Geraldine, somewhat impatiently, for the time is passing, and she is anxious to return to Great Gaunt Street; "but tell me where they went to."

"Well, 'm," replies Matilda, "I think as 'ow it were Bethnal Green way." This is a piece of brilliant fiction upon Matilda's part. "But, law! there's missis a callin'," she suddenly exclaims, "and I must go, 'm."

"You have given me no information worth having, girl!" angrily exclaims Geraldine, as Matilda stands with her hand upon the door, apparently anxious to get rid of her visitor. "I shall not pay you for what you have told me," she continues, her haggling disposition—the ruling passion of her nature—rising uppermost even at this crisis.

"I don't want none of yer money!" retorts Matilda, loftily. "If yer mean, I'm not," and so saying she deftly ousts her visitor out of the little hall and closes the door.

The Countess of Brakeholme finds herself in the shabby semi-private street; seething over with rage and baffled curiosity, she walks along slowly until she comes to the corner where there is a cabstand, and calling a four-wheeled cab, she drives off to Great Gaunt Street.

The countess is a clever woman—a woman who usually weighs her words and actions, and who looks before she leaps. But she has this evening made a false move, for Matilda, notwithstanding her desire to be loyal to Clement Woodleigh, was exasperated at the thought of losing the money, and in her rude, untutored mind, the first thought is "revenge."

"There's something queer about her," soliloquises Matilda, as she opens the street door cautiously, and peering out, sees her visitor pass under the nearest gas-lamp. "I don't b'lieve as how she's up to no good," she continues, blissfully unconscious of her confusion of

negatives, "and missus wasn't a callin'. I'll go after her a bit and see what she's up to."

CHAPTER XXXII.

She loves with love that cannot tire,
And when, ah! woe! she loves alone;
Through passionate longing love grows higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone.
C. PATMORE.

NO SOONER does the Countess of Brakeholme enter her cab than Matilda enters another one, and says to the astonished driver:

"I say, cabby, w'er ever that 'ere cab goes to do you follow it; an' mind, now, be spy, the money is all safe for yeh, so look sharp now, and don't lose sight of the cab."

"You're a rum 'un, you are," replies the cabman. "Wot is yer lark, my gal?"

"Never mind," she retorts, saucily. "Just do as yer bid."

Reflecting that it is no affair of his so long as he is paid for his time, cabby stirs up his horse and follows closely in the wake of the cab containing the Countess of Brakeholme.

"My eye!" ejaculates Matilda, as they enter the West End district, "she must be a real swell if she lives here. Only to think of old Miss Pierce and her brother a havin' such grand folks for relations. Why it's near where the Prince of Wales lives."

Great Gaunt Street is soon reached, and Matilda calls to the cabman to stop some little distance away from the other cab. There is some little delay whilst the cabman gives her change for one of her precious sovereigns, all the time eyeing poor Matilda suspiciously. He helps himself to a liberal fare, and then drives off again, soliloquising that if she has stolen the money, surely it can be no affair of his.

Meanwhile, the Countess of Brakeholme has gained her dressing-room. She fancies herself unseen, but what mistress can escape unscathed from that vohmergericht, yclept, the servants' hall.

To tell the honest truth, Jane Mason does her best towards trying to quell the torrent of invective which is poured out against her mistress; her only reward being taunts and sly innuendoes, which the single-hearted woman will not listen to. The result is, that she gains her mistress's dressing-room much about the same time as the countess does.

"Oh! my lady!" exclaims Jane Mason, with well-feigned amazement, "I did not expect you so soon up from the drawing-room. I have just come to lay out your dress for your reception."

Even the astute Geraldine swallows the bait; and, despite her annoyance at not seeing Isola Marbourne, and getting her into her power, she is somewhat flattered by her inner consciousness, as she reflects that her powers of dissimulation must be something beyond those of ordinary women.

Whilst the Countess of Brakeholme is debating between the merits of a brocaded amber satin and a pale chocolate and turquoise brocade, there is one outside the walls of the mansion whose fertile but untutored brain is rocked with doubts as to who the mysterious lady is, and which house she has entered.

For, during her delay in procuring change from the cabman, Matilda Jane lost sight of the exact house into which the mysterious lady had gone, and she is puzzled accordingly.

"I wonder as who she is," soliloquises Matilda, as blowed, and draggled-tailed, she walks slowly past the doors of the mansion and gazes wonderingly at the red cloth laid down from the hall door to the carriage-way, and at the awning overhead.

Never before has this child of the gutter seen anything like it, and as she stands there the hall door is opened, and she sees the gorgeous footmen lounging about.

"My eye!" she exclaims, half-aloud; "what swells! But I knows all the time that they're not a bit better than me. They're only servants, for all their grand red breeches! I wonder was she a funkey or a real lady? I couldn't see her

face right. If she was a lady it was a rum thing for her to go about in that way."

At this stage of Matilda Jane's reflections a handsome carriage drives up to the door, and magnificently dressed women descend and enter the house. They are but the fore-runners of many more, and Matilda Jane stands by the railings, open-eyed and open-mouthed, in delighted astonishment, and perfectly and utterly oblivious of the flight of time.

Occasionally a hansom or a private cab stops, the occupants being men—some young—some middle-aged—all coming to the Countess of Brakeholme's reception.

Presently a hansom stops at the door, and a tall man steps out.

Matilda Jane peers curiously at him as he stands under the gas-light, and recognises Clement Woodleigh.

A minute more, and the girl is by his side. Naturally, he does not recognise her, and is passing on when she says, eagerly:

"Oh, sir, I'm Matilda, as went for Mr. Bowden for you yesterday."

The painter gives a start, and stops with his feet upon the step of the door. The magnificent funkeys look on in disgust as they hear Clement Woodleigh say to the shabby, draggled-tailed girl:

"Well, what have you got to say to me?"

Matilda's rather grimy face colours up violently. After all, she has not much to say to him, but she blunders forth:

"I don't know as how I have much to say, but a lady as lives in this house came to our lodging-house to-night and offered me five pound to tell her where Miss Pierce and her brother went to."

"And you took the five pounds, and told, I presume?" he asks, rather scornfully.

"Is it me?" ejaculated Matilda Jane, with a tragical accent upon the pronoun—"is it me tell! No! I ain't so mean! I wouldn't tell her, and she got cross, and I didn't think it was all square, her comin' like that after Miss Pierce, so when she went away I followed her in another cab, and she lives here. But I didn't tell," continues poor Matilda Jane, "mind that! I wasn't so mean as all that, though I'm only a poor girl!"

And before Clement Woodleigh has time to reply, she darts away down the street.

Matilda Jane cries bitterly as she hails an omnibus that she knows will take her part of the way home. She had been inclined to make a sort of a god of the handsome painter, and his mistrust of her and the scornful tones of his voice have wounded her more deeply than Clement Woodleigh has the very faintest conception of.

He is not surprised at what the girl has told him. It only corroborates what Jane Mason had said, and Clement Woodleigh enters the mansion of the Earl of Brakeholme pondering over the strange manner in which the lines of the Lady Isola's destiny seem to be ever laid in his hands.

The reception is a brilliant one. Courteous cavaliers and stately dames are here in plenty; and Geraldine, Countess of Brakeholme, does the honours of the house in a graceful and dignified manner. Her pallid face flushes as Clement Woodleigh advances towards her and offers a few words of courteous congratulation. Others claim her attention; so that for the present there is no chance of having any conversation with the painter. He is introduced and lionised by his host; and it soon becomes noised throughout the rooms that he is the painter of the picture of the season.

The subject of it, and the rare beauty of the girl's face, are the subjects of much criticism, and the earl says to Clement Woodleigh, as they stand together near a doorway:

"When only my daughter's portrait has created such a sensation, how much more so would not her actual appearance in society? Woodleigh, my dear fellow, I am beginning to be almost in despair of ever finding her."

"My lord," replies Clement Woodleigh, eagerly, "I do not yet despair. Please Heaven, the Lady Isola will yet be restored to you."

"I trust so," he says, with a sigh; as he turns to bestow his attentions upon a stout dowager in diamonds and blue velvet.

Later on in the evening, Clement Woodleigh finds himself beside the Countess of Brakeholme, who congratulates him upon the success of his picture.

"I have not yet seen it," she says, "but my husband tells me," and here she lowers her voice, "that it is intended to be a portrait of our dear Isola."

"The Lady Isola's appearance suggested the picture," he replies, quietly. "I could scarcely have hoped to have been able to have reproduced the rare loveliness of the original."

The Countess of Brakeholme winces. Her pallid face becomes a shade paler, and she grasps with such force the delicate pearl and lace fan which she holds, so as to risk crushing the fragile toy.

"Yes," she replies, "she was very handsome, but, in my opinion, her utter want of culture was sufficient to nullify any physical perfections."

"Tastes differ," says Clement Woodleigh, with a slightly sarcastic smile; "as far as I saw, I considered the Lady Isola exceptionally intelligent."

"Intelligent, I grant, but uncultivated," returns the countess, her thick lips quivering with rage. "Moreover, I fancy the girl had naturally low instincts, else, how could she care to have gone back to her low associates?"

"I thought you yourself said she had been forcibly carried away," says Clement Woodleigh, looking full at the countess, who does not dare to raise her cat-like eyes to meet his steady glance.

"Bah!" she exclaims, with so much energy as to cause one or two people to look round. "I have come to the conclusion that that was all a deliberately laid plan."

"So have I," replies Clement Woodleigh. "I have also come to the conclusion that it was all a well-laid scheme, and that the Lady Isola was betrayed into the hands of her former persecutors."

Clement Woodleigh had not intended to say so much. But the countess's sneering manner of speaking of the Lady Isola has goaded him into it. She turns away, and her attention is engrossed by other guests; but Clement Woodleigh sees the crimson rage-spot glowing upon her cheek; whence it as suddenly fades, and he hears someone say:

"The Countess of Brakeholme has fainted."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Over the mountains and over the waves,
Under the fountains and under the graves,
Through floods that are deepest, which Neptune obey,
You'll ne'er stop a lover—he'll find out the way.

THERE is some commotion in the salon as the Countess of Brakeholme is restored to consciousness. It throws a sort of gloom over the company, and one by one the guests depart, Clement Woodleigh being one of the last to leave.

He has stayed on because he is curious to see how the countess will conduct herself. The cause of her fainting he is not quite sure of, but he has his suspicions respecting it.

"My dear Geraldine!" exclaims the earl, concernedly, "I am quite distressed about you. What was the reason for this?"

"The heat, dear," she replies, smiling amiably at her husband, who has supported her into a small ante-room. "Moreover," she continues, "think of the strain I have had upon my nerves lately, in thinking about Isola. I do not say much about it, but when I see you evidently grieving for her it makes me fancy that I, your wife, cannot make up to you for the absence of a daughter whom you have never even known."

The Earl of Brakeholme is slightly bewildered at the turn affairs have taken. The way in which Geraldine spoke reminds him of her conduct during the very early days of their marriage, and the soft-hearted nobleman is flattered and pleased accordingly.

"My dear Geraldine," he exclaims, actually gratified at seeming jealousy of Isola, "you mistake me. My affection for you is a totally distinct thing from that of my affection for my daughter. I am deeply sorry and remorseful if any conduct of mine has given you cause for grief, and I shall do all in my power to make reparation for it."

The Countess of Brakeholme declares herself able to say farewell to the few remaining guests. And presently all have departed save Clement Woodleigh.

He finds himself alone with the countess, the earl having just left the room.

"You seem to be especially interested in the recovery of the Lady Isola," she says, suddenly.

"Yes, naturally; I was so strangely instrumental in effecting her release that it is no wonder I take a more than ordinary interest in her."

The answer and the tone in which it is given both baffle and enrage the jealous woman. She looks at this man, standing there in the pride of his manly beauty, his Apollo-like head thrown slightly and proudly back, and his steady eyes gazing unflinchingly at her.

As she looks at him, Geraldine, Countess of Brakeholme, thinks that wealth and position would have been well sacrificed for the sake of being the wife of Clement Woodleigh.

"Man never is, but always would be, blessed," says the adage, and the Countess of Brakeholme thinks that since she can never hope to be the wife of Clement Woodleigh she would indeed feel blessed were she ever to get from him an avowal of love for herself.

She is a clever, scheming woman, and she believes in opportunity and propinquity as being two powerful elements towards developing a tender feeling between man and woman. And the Countess of Brakeholme decides that if it be in her power to do so she will try and engross the attentions of Clement Woodleigh during the season.

"She must have made a peculiarly deep impression upon your mind," she says, referring to the Lady Isola, "when you selected her as the subject for your picture this year."

"Yes," is the somewhat indifferent reply, "the whole scene made such an impression upon my mind, that I almost thought to exorcise it by taking the trouble to reproduce it upon canvas."

"And have you succeeded?" she asks, quickly and suspiciously.

"No," shortly and decidedly spoken.

"Perhaps, after all, you do not care to exorcise the vision?"

"I don't know that I do," is the reply; "the Lady Isola is so exceptionally lovely, I feel inclined to be trite and to say, 'a thing of beauty is a joy for ever.'"

The entrance of the earl interrupts the conversation, and Clement Woodleigh rises to take his leave.

"We are very happy to see you, Mr. Woodleigh," says the countess, sweetly and languidly, "and now that you have broken the ice, let us hope we shall the pleasure of seeing you often."

"Thank you," he answers; "you are very kind; but just at present I shall not be able to accept your kind invitation, as I meditate going abroad for a time at once."

Again Geraldine is baffled; but she hides it under a mask of smiles.

"Oh! how unfortunate! and how unkind of you!" she exclaims, in a well assumed reproachful voice; "just as you are beginning to be one of the lions of the season you run away. Perhaps it is a clever way of wishing to enhance your value."

"No, I cannot plead guilty to that," he replies, smiling, "important business calls me away, but I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you upon my return to London."

"Do you purpose staying long away?" the questioner is the Earl of Brakeholme.

"I cannot say. My first move is to Paris,

and then, very likely, to the south of France—the neighbourhood of Marseilles."

Clement Woodleigh soon afterwards takes his leave; and as he descends the steps of the mansion, he recalls the words of poor Matilda Jane.

Of course, he is perfectly aware that the mysterious lady who had gone in search of the so-called Miss Pierce was no other than the Countess of Brakeholme; and as he recollects the feverish, eager look in her face he comes to a pretty clear computation of the high stakes for which she is playing.

The next day he pays a visit to Tom Bowden's, and is somewhat surprised to find how very enfeebled Rupert Marbourne seems to have become. He is, however, able to speak coherently to Clement Woodleigh, and gives him more minute information respecting the gang with which he had been for so long associated.

"It was more my misfortune than my fault that I was led into such wicked ways in the beginning," he says, feebly, in extenuation of his confessed conduct; "it galled me, and it galled Isola, that for no fault of ours, we should have been looked down upon and branded as baseborn. Every man's hand was against us, so that, as a natural consequence, our hand was against every man. We became reckless. By right, I should be the Earl of Brakeholme—the man who now bears the title is only my younger step-brother. It is a hard law that makes the child suffer for the misdeeds of the father."

"Hush! hush!" says Clement Woodleigh. "You, of all others, have no right to say that."

"Why?" asks Isola Marbourne, fiercely. "Why have we not a right to say it?"

"Because you certainly tried to make the Lady Isola suffer for the misdeeds, in your estimation, of her father."

Further conversation is put an end to by the alarming weakness and nervous agitation of Rupert Marbourne.

Business appointments, which he cannot by any means avoid, combine to keep Clement Woodleigh in London for some days. At last a week elapses, and he finds that, even then, he cannot get away for some days to come.

He calls upon the Countess of Brakeholme, and is surprised to hear her ladyship is ill, and about to leave London for the continent.

"Can it be possible?" he thinks, as he walks away down the street, "that she can have heard anything of the whereabouts of the Lady Isola, and is following her, to try and get her farther into her power! I must find this out!" he exclaims, vehemently; "the woman is cunning and catlike enough to try and circumvent me, but I'll be even with her if possible."

Clement Woodleigh is a clever man, but he is not at times as astute as he fancies. The Countess of Brakeholme is certainly going abroad; having got an accommodating doctor to prescribe change of air for her. But she is not going in search of Isola, she is going in the vague hope of seeing Clement Woodleigh, and of entangling him in her toils.

But he knows nothing of this; and when he arrives in his studio, he sits down and writes the following note:

"DEAR LADY BRAKEHOLME,

"With much regret I heard when I called at Great Gaunt Street to-day, that you were so very indisposed as to be obliged to go abroad for change of air. I trust you may return in your wonted good health and spirits. I called to-day chiefly to speak to you about the miniature you wish to have copied; and which you did me the honour to consult me respecting. I would recommend Bond, of Great Russell Street, as the best man for your purpose. I have decided not to go to Paris, but to go straight to Marseilles instead; and leave London in a day or two. With my compliments to his lordship.

"Believe me, yours faithfully,

"CLEMENT WOODLEIGH."

The Countess of Brakholme receives this note as she is dressing for her tête-à-tête dinner with her lord. She reads it over several times, and then, as she sits, thinking, with the missive in her hand, a bright thought strikes her.

(To be Continued.)

POISONING BY BURNING GAS.

To have our rooms pleasantly illuminated by gas is to undergo a process of poisoning, the more disastrous because instead of directly producing the characteristic symptoms of defective blood oxygenation, the gas-polluted atmosphere insidiously lowers the tone of vitality, and establishes a condition favourable to disease. It would be difficult to overrate the importance of this household peril. Pictures are spoiled by gas, gilt mouldings are tarnished, the colours of decorated walls and ceilings fade, and men and women of delicate organisation are enfeebled and injured by the foul air in which gas is discharged and supposed to burn innocuously.

The extent to which this evil works in the midst of domesticated families during the long evenings is not adequately appreciated. After the first few unpleasant experiences are over the physical insensibility becomes inured to the immediate results of an atmosphere charged, more or less heavily, with the products of combustion and unconsumed coal gas. It is not creditable to the ingenuity of practical men that no method has yet been devised by which the advantages of gas as an illuminating agent may be secured without the drawback of slow poisoning, with the host of maladies a depressed vitality is sure to bring in its train.

HER GUIDING STAR;

OR,

LOVE AND TREACHERY.

CHAPTER XXX.

RACHEL's attendance on Mr. Fannuir had continued with a few intermissions since it was first required; for, though his displeasure against Jessie had nearly worn itself out, and was no longer manifested, he evidently found a satisfaction in the quiet little Quaker, and a pleasure in the free appropriation of her time, which he did not choose to relinquish. She came, therefore, as usual, and with the same persistency saw only Mr. Fannuir.

Jessie, at first really wishing to establish a friendly relation with her, had made frequent attempts to meet and to detain her, but in vain.

A quiet "farewell" was all she could obtain; till, half vexed at what she considered an ungracious return to her advances, she gave the matter up.

The morning after the decision in favour of the London visit, Mr. Fannuir returned from a ride to inspect some work he had in hand with a ruffled look, that indicated either that it had not prospered, or that something else was wrong. Going to his own room, he gave orders that when Rachel came no one should disturb him.

On entering, he found Henry awaiting his return for directions in regard to improvements to be made in his grandfather's absence. The business settled, he stood looking from a window commanding the walk by which Rachel would approach. It was not long before she appeared.

"Your reader is coming, sir," said he.

"Very well; then you may go."

There was nothing in the words, but they were accompanied by a look and emphasis that gave them significance, and Henry was seized with a temptation that had more than once beset him—a desire to hear what passed on these occasions.

At this moment it was stronger than ever, and the facility with which it might be accomplished rendered it unconquerable. The head of the high, old-fashioned bedstead, surrounded by full heavy curtains, was near the door by which the room was entered, and, to guard against a draught, there was a large folding screen reaching nearly to the ceiling. This was so placed between the bed and the door to admit of a person being concealed by it from anyone entering the room, while the curtains furnished an equal protection from those within it.

Apparently obeying his grandfather, Henry passed round the screen, opened the door, and, closing it again, slipped noiselessly between the screen and the bed—awaiting, with breathless interest, the interview.

The approaching footsteps of Rachel in the hall would have prevented Mr. Fannuir detecting that none had passed from his door, had a suspicion been awakened. But it was not, and the entrance of Rachel led to their usual occupation.

"Motioning to a chair near him:

"Here is the paper, child," said he; "we will take that first."

This being "read and marked," though perhaps not as "inwardly digested" as usual, Rachel was laying it aside, when a paragraph unnoticed before caught her eye, and she read aloud the heading—"A Domestic Tragedy."

"Shall I read it?" she asked.

"Certainly. Go on."

It recorded the death of a young girl in Edinburgh, under circumstances of peculiar interest. She had been addressed by a youth of superior fortune and condition, who had secured her affection; but his father had forbidden the marriage in terms so offensive and injurious to her, that self-respect had silenced love, and she had broken off all intercourse with his son. He, in despair, had fallen into intemperate habits, and had met a violent death in a street brawl; at which she, struck to the heart, and reproaching herself as the cause, lost her senses and died miserably.

Rachel's voice faltered as she read, and Mr. Fannuir, as she concluded, said:

"Poor girl! I think I know that man; not personally, but by name and character. He was a hard man. 'Tis all true, I am afraid."

Rachel, having often been encouraged by Mr. Fannuir to express her opinion of what was read, ventured to say:

"It seemeth to me that of the three she hath the least need of pity; the father the most, for he was the oppressor. She, and he whom she loved, have gone to a more merciful parent. He remaineth alone with his remorse."

The solemnity of her voice and words, instead of rousing a spirit of contradiction, affected him.

"Very true, child; very true. But don't you think she, too, had some cause for remorse?"

"Nay, not remorse; perhaps for regret, on account of human weakness, inasmuch as it may be that she had spoken unadvisedly with her lips, and had given place to wrath. If so, it was the word, not the deed, of which she had need to repent, for is it not manifest there remained nothing else for her to do?"

Mr. Fannuir was silent, but after a long look into her face, which was calmly and fearlessly turned towards him, he replied, by asking, emphatically:

"What would you have done? You do not speak. I will tell you. You, a cool, discreet, wise little Quaker as you are, would have taken the bit between your teeth if you had been thus used, and would have married the son in spite of his father; and, as it turned out, I must say, have done rightly."

Rachel's colour rose, her lips moved, as if to speak, but she was silent. After a moment's pause, she shook her head, and repeated:

"Rightly! Men often judge righteous judgment in the case of others. But right or not, so I would not have done."

"Then proceeding, with a kindling eye but a firm tone, she said:

"I am one in humble condition, without any of this world's riches. I could bring no dowry but an honest name. But, though I render not worship to titles, nor to rank, nor to great estates, I would enter no man's family unbidden and unwelcome. I ought not to esteem him higher for the things that perish; neither may I, by a mean action, sink lower than Heaven hath placed me. I have not been taught to take the height of others as a rule by which to measure myself or my duty."

Her manner seemed to have a magnetic influence on Mr. Fannuir. Accustomed, as he had been, to implicit obedience—unfortunate for himself as for others—impatient of the least contrariety, even in opinion, yet when she presumed to utter a displeasing truth, she acted on him as a sedative. He could as soon have directed a burst of anger against a statue, as against her impassive calmness.

He looked at her fixedly, as if endeavouring to read her thoughts.

"Rachel," said he, at length, "you know a person by the name of Simon Smoothly."

"I do."

"He has been a lover of yours."

"He has sought me in marriage."

"And you have refused him, though he appears an eligible connection."

"My heart did not incline to him."

"He is an industrious, respectable young man; well-looking, and well-behaved."

"I do not deny it."

"He will, to be sure, have to work pretty hard a few years, and you would be obliged to make exertions greater than in your father's house; but, he will be a prosperous man; he has all the necessary qualifications."

"I doubt it not."

"Rachel, you have been much in my family; were born under my roof; your mother was an excellent woman; you have conducted yourself well, and have rendered me kind and willing service, so that I feel interested in your welfare. If you will consent to marry this young man, who seems truly attached to you, I will befriend him in the way of business, and your marriage portion shall be five hundred pounds."

Rachel's face betrayed that she was moved. She did not attempt to speak for a moment, then, in a clear voice, but not without effort, she said:

"Thou art too generous! I thank thee. May Heaven be good unto thee, as thou hast been to me and mine. But I may not profit by thine offer. I do not love the man."

"Love begets love," persisted Mr. Fannuir. "Besides, prudence as well as affection is to be considered in these things. It is safer for you, Rachel," continued he, with an earnest look, "far safer to have the protection of a husband. You are young and handsome. Someone may regard you with a love not as honest as poor Simon's. Be wise in time."

Her blushing cheek showed that she felt, as well as understood the insinuation; but she

answered nothing, save with her brown eyes.

Her evident distress affected Mr. Fannuir, and in a tone grave, but not stern, he proceeded:

"Rachel! Simon tells me that he fears you love another—that you are ambitious. If this be so, hear me. He to whom you have raised your hopes cannot marry you. He may love you—our affections are often not in our own keeping; but sorrow, if nothing worse, can only attend such an attachment. I wish to shield you from all harm, and see you the happy and respectable wife of an honest man."

Like all strong natures, which, when they do yield, pour themselves forth without reserve, Rachel's burst through it accustomed restraint. She sat, for a moment, with hands clasped, with an upcast look, as if asking direction, and then, suddenly turning to Mr. Fannuir, she exclaimed:

"Thou shalt know all! Thou art merciful and just. I have loved thy grandson! but, were he now to offer me marriage, I should reject it. I do not ask thy forgiveness. I have never, even in thought, sinned against thee; but I do entreat that thou wilt trust me, for thine own peace, as well as for my honour."

Her face beaming with expression, her hands pressed convulsively to her breast, her voice full of power, her earnest words, altogether so touched Mr. Fannmuir, that he could only gaze on her with pity and admiration. When, as if dropped from the clouds or sprung from the earth—so noiseless and sudden his appearance—Henry was kneeling before him.

"Hear me, sir," he exclaimed. "She has not told you all. Oh, let me do her the justice she has not rendered to herself."

But the anger that Rachel had disarmed now found an object. The fluid, innoxious to her, burst upon Henry's devoted head.

"Rise, sir," said Mr. Fannmuir, "Do not farther disgrace yourself by adding to the deceptions already practiced upon me. I am not the blind, easy man, under whose very roof you have hoped to carry out your designs. I do not blame this unfortunate girl; her affection has made her a mere instrument in your hands."

Rising from his suppliant attitude, his face flushed, and trembling with emotion, Henry exclaimed:

"I should be unworthy of your blood if I could hear such language unmoved. Listen to me, sir; I do not now ask it as a favour; I claim it as a right. I do not deserve the imputation you cast on me. I did not practice on you, as you suppose, by the introduction of Rachel into your house. It was your own act. So far from being done to further our intercourse, we have never met till this moment under this roof since the day she came at your own request."

Mr. Fannmuir looked at Rachel, who, at Henry's appearance, had retreated, and now sat pale as marble, like one stunned, in the first chair into which she could drop.

"Is this true?" asked Mr. Fannmuir.

She bowed her head, and scarcely articulated: "It is."

"I must and will speak farther," continued Henry, with passionate earnestness. "We were allowed to grow up together from children without counsel or check—with no guard but the angel who has watched over her innocence. Look at her, sir! Is it strange that I should love her? I solemnly declare that, if I have been preserved from the vices and follies of other young men, you owe it to that girl—to her image in my heart, and her influence on my mind. Yet was I coward and base enough to dread your displeasure more than her injury—to seek to obtain unworthily what I dared not ask honourably. But she cast me from her, as I deserved; and, when I offered reparation for the insult, she would not hear me; she would condescend to no clandestine proceeding. I was denied even the privilege of seeing or speaking to her. Then it was that, in a moment of desperation, I tried to carry out your wishes in regard to my cousin. You know the result. I regret to disappoint and displease you, sir; you have a right to everything but my honour. By that, as strongly as by my love, I am bound to Rachel. I shall seek to be restored to her affection. If I succeed, disinherited and beggared, I shall marry her."

Mr. Fannmuir listened without an attempt to interrupt him, his strong, expressive face betraying the various emotions by which he was agitated; but, as Henry ceased, he broke forth:

"By heaven, you shall do no such thing! No. As the heir of my name and fortune, you shall bestow both on a girl who has earned them so nobly. Come hither, Rachel."

Henry, animated with newly-awakened hopes, darted forward and led her to his grandfather, who, seating her by his side, and laying his hand gently on her head, said:

"I see it all, my child—your temptations and your resistance, your trials and your strength. If there is blame, it attaches to those older than yourself, who should have foreseen consequences. You have suffered enough for their folly. You will forgive Harry? Yes, yes, you know," continued he, with a smile, to encourage her—"you know you are a Christian maiden, and must act consistently, when I, not half so good as you are, set you the example. There!" said

he, joining their hands, while his voice changed. "Now go; you cannot speak freely here, and I am better alone at present."

Henry grasped his grandfather's hand, and could just say: "The Lord for ever bless you, sir!" and, as Mr. Fannmuir extended it to Rachel, she pressed it to her lips and heart, but utterance she had none; then, yielding to Henry, who tenderly drew her arm within his own, they left the room.

Mr. Fannmuir sat a few moments, his head resting on his hand; then, rising and walking to the window, he said:

"Yes, there they go; thank Heaven, I have at last made them happy. My pride and passion have for once yielded. Would that they had oftener done so." Then, pacing his room for some time, he said: "Well, we are strange creatures. My fondest and apparently wisest plans for that boy have been thwarted; my pride, in the tenderest point, wounded; my hopes of a posterity, of blood as good and honourable as my own, disappointed. Instead of a race as gentle as that from which I descend, there will be an infusion of little 'broad-brims' and 'the Fannmuir' will 'quarter' with 'the Austins.' And yet I am happier than I have been these twenty years."

As may be inferred, Rachel was not inexorable; and Henry returned to dinner so radiant, that Jessie, who met him at the hall-door, looked at him suspiciously; and, shading her eyes with her hand, said:

"The light of your face blinds me; I might as well gaze at the sun. What has happened, Cousin Harry?"

Without answering, except by a smile, he drew her aside, and, leading her into the garden, unfolded his felicity. He could not have found a more sympathising auditor. So pleased and excited was she, that when Mr. Fannmuir entered the dining-room, his face grave, but kind, recovering all her former familiarity with him, she rushed up to him, and, putting her arms round his neck, exclaimed:

"Dear grandpapa, I must kiss you, for you are the very best grandfather in the world."

He was evidently pleased with this spontaneous testimony of approval, and said, affectionately:

"Now I have only you to care for."

"Oh, never mind. I'll—"

"Take care of yourself, I daresay, as Harry has done. Well, it must be confessed that the present generation spare their friends a deal of trouble, by so readily undertaking the charge of themselves. But here's the dinner. We'll talk farther by-and-bye."

Mr. Fannmuir having desired that no one but those immediately interested should be informed of the occurrence of the morning till his return, it was understood that he reserved to himself the making it public in his own way.

The next morning, at the usual hour, Rachel appeared; but, instead of being conducted to Mr. Fannmuir, was taken to Miss Janet's room, where an affectionate greeting awaited her.

Jessie gazed on her with surprise and admiration.

"What a resurrection," she thought. "That face is now really alive, which, if I had not heard of Pygmalion and his statue, I should have doubted that it could inspire love. A real, live tear trembles in those beautiful eyes, and that mantling colour betrays that she is actually flesh and blood. She speaks, she smiles. And Aunt Janet too. I have never seen her so moved. Can it be only sympathy? while she kisses her, she turns away and weeps. Dear me. I am sure I could do so too."

"My dear child," said Miss Fannmuir, "how happy I am to secure you. I now understand what has appeared estrangement, and I admire you all the more for it. I shall never again distrust your love."

"Distrust," replied Rachel; "why, I love the very ground thou walkest on."

"And me," said Jessie; "have you no love for me, too, Rachel?"

"Thee! oh, doubt it not. Yesterday I felt as if my heart were dead; to-day I love everybody."

"And you will never be jealous of me again?"

"Nay, Jessie, not so. I was not jealous of thee; I did not sin against thee by an evil thought; I was only jealous of myself. There was a narrow path before me; and I was inwardly admonished to walk therein. I did not dare to see anyone who would call up thoughts forbidden."

"Well, a wider and a pleasanter path is opening to you now, dear Rachel."

"Yes, truly, my borders are enlarged," she replied, but in a manner which, though grave, was so simple and childlike, that Jessie could not suppress a smile; and Rachel, now in a mood to respond to every pleasurable emotion, involuntarily returned it; at the same time saying: "Thou laughest, Jessie, and, perhaps, at me, for I know that my 'dress and address' are often strange unto thee. But, now that I am happy, I will prove to thee that there is a real girl's heart under these; and that, if I cannot be acceptable to thee by what godly William Penn calleth the 'trims and a la modeness of dress,' I will try to be so by a cheerful spirit."

"I believe you," said Jessie; "henceforth we are friends."

The time of the London visit was now close at hand, the day appointed, and within a week from that time Mr. Fannmuir, Aunt Janet and Jessie were safely domiciled in Mr. Farleigh's suburban residence.

(To be Continued.)

A LAWYER'S FIRST ADDRESS.

THERE are few mental tortures more terrible than that which a young lawyer, constitutionally timid, suffers when for the first time he rises to address the court and jury. No nightmare is more frightful than those twelve men, honest and true, presided over by the frowning majesty of the bench. They are, then and there, all the world to him, and a horrible world it is to his brain, bewildered by the sight and a natural diffidence.

Mr. K— tells of such a scene which was turned into a triumph by the will-power of the young man and the sympathy of the court. He says:

"I remember the agony with which the confused novitiate arose a second time, having been but a moment before compelled to take his seat, in the hope to collect his routed thoughts. His second essay was not more fortunate than the first. He stood silent for a brief space, and at the end was enabled to say:

"Gentlemen, I declare to Heaven that if I had an enemy upon whose head I would invoke the most cruel torture, I could wish him no other fate than to stand where I stand now."

"Curiously enough, the sympathy which this appeal brought him seemed almost instantly to give him strength. A short pause was followed by another effort which was completely and even triumphantly successful."

CYCLONES AND HOP-VINES.

ALL our general storms are cyclonic in their character, that is, rotary and progressive. Their type may be seen in every little whirlpool that goes down the swollen current of the river, and in our hemisphere they revolve in the same direction, namely, from right to left, or in opposition to the hands of a watch. When the water finds an outlet through the bottom of a dam, a suction or whirling vortex is developed, that generally goes round in the same direction.

A morning-glory or a hop-vine or a pole-bean winds around its support in the same course, and cannot be made to wind in any other. In the southern hemisphere, the cyclone revolves in the other direction, or from left to right. How do they revolve at the equator, then? They do not revolve at all. This is the point

of zero, and cyclones are never formed nearer than the third parallel of latitude. Whether hop-vines refuse to wind about the poles, there, we are unable to say.

THE GREAT MYSTERY.

THE body is to die; so much is certain. What lies beyond? No one who passes the charmed boundary comes back to tell. The imagination visits the realm of shadows—sent out from some window in the soul over life's restless waters, but wings its way wearily back, with an olive leaf in its beak as a token of emerging life beyond the closely bending horizon. The great sun comes and goes in the heaven, yet breathes no secret of the ethereal wilderness; the crescent moon cleaves her nightly passage across the upper deep, but tosses overboard no message, and displays no signals.

The sentinel stars challenge as they walk their nightly rounds, but we catch no syllable of their countersign which gives passage to the heavenly camp. Between this and the other life is a great fixed gulf across which neither eye nor foot can travel. The gentle friend whose eyes we closed in their last sleep long years ago, died with rapture in her wonder-stricken eyes, a smile of ineffable joy upon her lips, and hands folded over a triumphant heart, but her lips were past speech, and intimated nothing of the vision that enthralled her.

THE BARONESS OF THE ISLES.

CHAPTER III.

It was the next morning.

Castle Rushen was at its gayest. The courtiers were moving to and fro, intent upon projects of enjoyment. Workmen were already employed in preparations for the grand tournament to be held three days later. Herald had been despatched throughout the length and breadth of the island to invite all knights to take part in the mimic fray. But, during the interval, how were they to be amused? How was the time to be filled up? How was the Lady Matilda to be entertained by her royal host?

King Reginald sat in his private room, a great Gothic chamber, pondering upon this and kindred questions.

In the midst of his reflections, a knock was heard upon the door—a knock which the monarch recognised.

"Come in, Wildred," he called in a loud voice.

The door opened, and a courtier, his special favourite, the companion of many of his revels, entered.

This was the knight Wildred. He was a man of impoverished fortune and dissolute character, but he was also of good birth, and possessed many qualifications that rendered him indispensable to his royal master.

"Do I intrude upon your majesty?" inquired Wildred, advancing with hesitation.

"No, no, good Wildred. In truth, your presence is welcome," said the king. "I have a difficult problem to solve. Perhaps you can help me."

Wildred approached quite near to the monarch, so that his response was uttered in low tones.

"What is it, my lord?" he asked. "Has your majesty fallen in love again? or is there some plan for enriching the royal coffers? Whatever your problem, your majesty can rely upon my devotion and discretion."

"I know it, Wildred. Well, the truth is, I have fallen in love again, as you say, only this is love such as I never knew before," said the king.

Wildred smiled.

"I knew what you would say, my lord," he declared. "Ah, I am not blind! Last night I saw your majesty watch the Lady Matilda, and I knew your heart had been smitten by her charms. By my faith, she is royal in her beauty and grace—and she is rich also!" and the king's favourite sighed.

"You have been smitten by her also, I think," said the king.

"Yes, your majesty. I saw the Lady Matilda at her castle some months ago. I was upon a hunting expedition, and was driven by a sudden storm to seek the shelter of her roof. I told her of my love, but she refused to marry me. I was not good enough for the daughter of Godred," he added, with ill-concealed bitterness. "She preferred the knight Ivar."

"Well, I have fixed my fancy upon her," said the king. "I love her, Wildred. I am wild to possess her. She is the representative of the noblest family in Man. She is a great heiress, and has a host of followers and retainers. My people murmur at my reckless ways, my revelries and lawless doings. They compare me to my disadvantage with my father and my late brother. Now, if I were to wed this noble Manx heiress I should stifle disaffection in the bud, I should please everybody, and strengthen myself with my subjects. Why should I not do it? I will please my people and myself. I will marry the Lady Matilda."

"She will be glad enough, your majesty, to change her Ivar for a royal lover."

"There you do not know her. I have offered her my hand and heart and crown, but she has refused them all, and clings to Ivar and her troth."

"Is the maiden mad?"

"Not mad, but foolish," replied the king. "She loves this Ivar, despite his obscure birth and poverty—perhaps because of them. Now, I have sworn to myself to possess the Lady Matilda, wealth and all. But before I can win her I must wane her heart from Ivar. I have put the case to her in all kindness, but still she clings to him. The problem that now occupies me is how to turn her from him."

"The thing is not difficult," said Wildred thoughtfully. "Your majesty is supreme. You can banish Ivar. You can cause him to be attainted of treason and put to death. You can have him secretly killed."

"But measures like these might cause the maiden to hate me, whereas I want her to abhor him," said the king. "I can adopt some of them later, if other means fail. But is there no way to humiliate him in her sight? Come, you have a ready wit, Wildred. Devise some plan that shall make the Lady Matilda regard her lover with aversion."

Wildred reflected intently.

He hated Ivar for having won the heiress whom he had coveted.

He hated him also because at a tournament during the previous year Ivar had publicly disarmed and conquered him. Moreover, the favourite would have turned against a personal friend to please his royal master, and he entered heart and soul into King Reginald's plans.

"I have it!" he cried, at length, his visage brightening. "Ivar is of unknown birth—a waif of the sea, he called himself."

"Yes," declared the king. "He was found floating at sea twenty odd years ago."

"Whose son does your majesty think he might be?"

The king started and regarded his sycophant narrowly.

"Whose?" he asked, sharply. "Whose should he be? What question is this?"

"I believe him to be a fisher's son," said Wildred. "True, he has a noble air, but he was reared by a noble knight, and has been much in courtly company. He is, without doubt, some low-born fellow. His parents were lost in the storm in which he was wrecked. Their little fishing-craft went down with all on board save him. Now, his fisher father being dead, what is there to prevent a fisherman boldly claiming him as his son?"

The king had been startled by Wildred's pre-

vious question, and had listened to this speech with grave preoccupation. Now he roused himself, with a look of new interest, and exclaimed:

"The very thing. But where will you find the fisherman? One who could carry through his part without suspicion?"

"That will be easy enough, my lord. I know a man who will act the part well. He belonged upon my father's estate, and he would do anything for money. I will go and see him at once."

"You know Ivar's history?"

"As much, your majesty, as he knows himself. I heard what he told to you, my lord. Imagination will serve to fill out the details. Old Moggle will act the father to the life. I shall like to see our young knight Ivar when old Moggle claims him for his son. The Lady Matilda has her share of pride. She'll never cling to a lover so humiliated."

"This old Moggle—where does he live?"

"Near Longness Point—across the bay, my lord—in an old hut. We might make an excursion thither this afternoon. If your majesty would cross the bay in your royal barge and be present, the humiliation of Ivar would be the more complete."

"I like not the water," said the king, uneasily. "It has worked much harm to those of my race. I like not even to go upon the bay in a barge upon a still day like this. I have a superstition that the sea hath a gaping maw for those of my blood. Do you remember, that only two years since, my brother Harold, with his young wife, the Princess Cecilia of Norway, were drowned off Redland, with all their followers? You know, too, that one-and-twenty years ago he was nearly lost at sea, with his first wife, the Lady Etheldreda, daughter of a Saxon earl, who is now prioress of the nunnery and Baroness of the Isles? He was but a youth then, and our father was King of Man."

"I remember it well. The Lady Etheldreda was cast ashore, seemingly lifeless. Her infant son was lost. Her despair at his loss was so great that upon her recovery she retired to the convent, and begged Harold to obtain a dissolution of their marriage, as she desired to devote herself thenceforward to religion. Hard as it was for him, Harold granted her prayer, and they were divorced. And she now rules over the convent, and has a court of her own, and rivals my court in luxury and refinements, and lives as becomes the widow of a monarch. But for her years, and the nearness of relationship, I would have made her my queen, Wildred. She is a right noble lady."

The king seemed to have been betrayed into these reminiscences of his brother's first wife by his remembrance of that brother's fate.

"I think, your majesty," said Wildred, "that the sea is satisfied with the sacrifice of Harold. Twice it struggled for him. The second time it engulfed him. But these apprehensions are not suited to you, my lord. The sea has never yawned to take you in. And to-day the water is like oil—so calm and shining. Be persuaded, my lord. The affair will lose half its meaning and humiliation if you are not there."

The monarch allowed himself to be persuaded, and yielded assent.

Then Wildred departed upon his errand of mischief.

Some hours later, after midday, a grand water excursion was organised. King Reginald inviting the Lady Matilda, the knight Ivar, and several of his courtiers to accompany him in his royal barge.

Other barges were in readiness for other courtiers, and the party set out in high spirits. The royal barge was gay with awnings and banners.

The rowers were dressed in uniform, and were skilled in their duties.

The boats shot out upon the placid bay, the royal craft a length ahead. The Lady Matilda, robed in Mantua silk wrought with gold thread, looked unusually lovely. Her eyes sought the face of Ivar very often, and he, in turn, watched

her with proud affection, now and then exchanging a few sentences with her.

The king was courteous to all, but devoted himself to the Lady Matilda in a marked manner.

The maiden, somewhat embarrassed by the devotion of Reginald, clung to the Princess Africa, the king's sister, but was unusually quiet and thoughtful.

Upon setting out, no definite destination had been named, but as the barges crossed the bay and the mountains loomed up before them, the king announced his intention of landing upon the opposite shore and trying the virtues of a much-vaunted spring which bubbled up among the rocks at a little distance from the beach.

The courtiers expressed their delight, and the barges made for the point indicated.

In due time they landed safely. The king gave his hand to the Lady Matilda and assisted her to the shore. The courtiers followed.

The spring was visited and its waters tasted. They were lingering beside it still, king and courtiers in one large group, when a rough old fisherman, of sinister aspect, rudely garbed, came climbing over the rocks and approached them.

He was Moggle—the man of whom Wildred had spoken.

He had been well-tutored, and was now come to play the part that had been assigned him.

He had a weather-beaten visage, battered features, ragged hair of a fair colour, and was heavily built.

He made a low obeisance to the king, who stood apart—his dress and bearing proclaiming his dignity—and offered to pilot his majesty to certain objects of interest at a little distance up the coast.

The king declined the offer, and turned as if to go.

At that moment the fisherman's gaze rested upon the young knight Ivar, who, fair and noble, with the air and bearing of a royal prince, stood beside the Princess Africa.

Now, Moggle had seen Ivar more than once, and knew him by sight, so that he could not be mistaken by his identity. At sight of him, therefore, he sprang backwards, and slapped his chest, and uttered a loud cry, apparently of amazement.

"What is it?" demanded the king. "Is the man mad?"

"Your majesty," gasped old Moggle, "who is he? The young knight? That face is the face of my poor wife, who sank in yonder sea twenty years ago! Who is he?"

"By our lady," cried the monarch, "but this is strange. The youth is the knight Ivar. He looks like your wife, say you?"

"Ay, your majesty! It stirs my old heart to look upon him. He is noble, and a knight. Pardon me, your majesty, and you also, good knight. I am humble and poor, but to-day, had it not been for the sea that swallowed up my wife and child, I should have been the father of a youth of Sir Ivar's age and with his very countenance."

"How is this?" exclaimed the king. "Did you lose a son twenty years ago in a storm at sea?"

"Ay, your majesty. It was one-and-twenty years ago. We were in a fishing craft with my two brothers. An awful storm came on. The boat sprung a leak. We lashed the child to a spar, and then the vessel sank. My wife and brothers went down in her. Oh, that was an awful night of storm and wreck. I was driven ashore, clinging to a board, but not one of the others were saved. Wife, child and brothers—all were lost."

The king turned his gaze with burning significance upon the knight Ivar.

"By our lady," cried Reginald, "but it seems to me that this is the other part of that same tale you told to me but yesterday, good Ivar. This man hath lost a son at twenty-one years ago. You were found at sea at that very time. These two—are they not father and son?"

He looked around upon the amazed group, who eagerly echoed his words.

Old Moggle moved towards Ivar, his features working, his arms outstretched.

"Ivar was found at sea at that very time!" ejaculated the old fisher. "He has my wife's face! He is—he is my son! Ivar, do not spurn your poor old father! Ah, Heaven hath restored my lost one!"

He made a bound forward, as if to embrace the young knight, but Ivar, pale as death, waved him back with a stern gesture.

"Wait!" cried the youth, in a ringing voice. "If you are my father, which I doubt, you will answer certain questions which I shall put to you. I certainly shall not accept you as my parent without ample proof that you are such. What was the name of your fishing-vessel which was lost?"

Old Moggle retreated a step.

The falcon eyes, the commanding air, the haughty bearing of the young knight disconcerted him. He had expected his claims to be met differently. He stared sulkily at the youth, as he answered:

"She was the 'Ulrica.' That was my wife's name."

"She was lost—when?"

"Twenty-one years ago, in May."

Ivar's face did not change, though the date mentioned tallied with the date of his recovery from the sea.

"The day of the month?" he questioned.

"It was early in May, the second week," said old Moggle, uneasily. "I can remember exactly if I take time."

"It is not necessary," said Ivar, carelessly. "Were there any marks upon your son by which you could identify him?"

"None that I remember."

"Ah! But you can describe his dress, of course? You were a fisher and poor. His dress was humble?"

Old Moggle shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

Here was a dilemma.

"Well," he said, after a brief season of thought, "it's so many years since, I couldn't identify the garments. His mother had ever a taste for finery, and the clothes might have been fine and decked with work, for aught I can remember. But you are my son, that I'll swear to."

"Don't be in too great haste to swear, good Moggle," said Ivar, in tones of irony. "The child—myself—wore but a night-gown and armlets, but the gown was richly wrought and beyond your purse, and the armlets were of fine gold and set with gems. No fisher's purse ever paid for them."

"They were a gift to the child from sponsors," cried old Moggle. "I remember them well—of fine gold and set with gems. The knight Crovan, now dead, rest his soul, gave them to my son."

"You remember them well, you say? Describe them, then."

Old Moggle, fairly caught in his own net, inwardly anathematized himself for having admitted that he remembered the armlets. He attempted a bungling description of them, the perspiration pouring down his face, but Ivar only smiled contemptuously, and replied:

"You have evidently never seen these armlets of mine. They are peculiar, and not at all like your description. You are either mistaken in your claims or an impostor. Certainly you are nothing to me."

He turned on his heel and walked down to the barge.

Wilfred and certain others of the courtiers cried out that Moggle had made good his claims, and that Ivar was the fisher's son. The king frowned heavily.

His plan had miscarried, although so many of his followers believed Ivar the son of Moggle. Ivar had refused to be humiliated, and, worse than all, the Lady Matilda, quitting the side of the princess, walked after her lover to the barge, and placed her hand in his with a love and confidence that seemed greater than ever before.

"This is a scheme of some enemy," said Ivar

to her, in tones that reached the king's hearing. "That man my father! My whole being revolts against his claims. I may be of humble birth, but Moggle is not my parent."

"Anyone can see that at a glance," answered the Lady Matilda, in tones low but equally distinct. "Can the barn-yard fowl father the wild eagle? He your father? Impossible!"

The king turned his back upon old Moggle and the group of courtiers, and walked moodily down to the barge.

"Failed!" he thought, in bitterness and rage. "By my faith, I will not be conquered by him. I have suspicions of his identity. If they be true it is doubly to my interest to rid myself of him. The tournament shall work out his humiliation, despair, and death! He shall not live much longer. I hate him—and I begin to fear him. Whom Reginald has cause to fear must die!"

(To be Continued.)

FISH CULTURE IN WISCONSIN.

OPERATIONS were begun at the Milwaukee hatching house in October. It is intended to hatch the coming season 12,000,000 whitefish and 6,000,000 lake trout. Nearly all these fry will be placed in Lake Michigan off the Wisconsin ports. Smaller quantities will go to the island lakes which are large and deep enough for the purpose. All the hatchery in this city the production of wall-eyed pike will also be begun the coming season. At Madison preparations are made to supply all the brook trout for which requisitions may be made. They have 20,000 breeders in the Madison hatchery, and spawn will also be taken from wild trout in the stream—in the north-western part of the State. Much dissatisfaction has heretofore existed because the brook trout were not furnished in amounts as required to replenish the exhausted streams of the State. The fish commissioners hope to have enough fry next spring to answer all requisitions for these fish.

Mr. Welsher has been appointed to have charge of the aquarium at the Chicago exposition, and will produce specimens of fish from Wisconsin waters for that purpose. The fish commissioners have supplied over one hundred lakes and streams during the last two years with several varieties of fish.

LAZINESS.

LAZINESS is a bad disease, and, like many other kinds, is often self-imposed. In the case of many individuals, it is an inherited malady, and consequently hard to oust from the system. But it is oftener the case that the disgusting temper is brought on by persons by their own deliberate selfishness—by a vastly creditable disposition to shirk the inevitable burdens incident to living a decent life. Laziness of this kind is one of the cardinal sins, and should submit the obnoxious offender to the discipline of the tread-mill.

More particularly is laziness offensive to the young and healthy. To learn to work, and work cheerfully, is the central lesson of life. Begin to learn it early—eschew laziness as the most disgusting of all faults, and one that will surely end in hopeless misery; for, depend upon it, none can be so insensible through laziness as to be, in the end, incapable of suffering. Nature is, in the event of a non-payment of her demands, a stern and merciless creditor.

THERE is said to be a terrestrial globe in the Jesuitic Library of the Lyons Lyceum, which the English and American travellers have lately rediscovered. It is two meters in diameter, and an inscription, near the north pole, states that it was made in the year 1701, by F. F. Bonaventure and Gregoire, Brothers of the Third Order of St. Francis. The globe has created a great sensation among geographical savants and amateurs.



[A LADY'S GLOVE.]

MY FIRST CLIENT.

I HAD passed a successful examination, and was ready for all the legal honours and emoluments that I doubted not an appreciative public would be equally ready to bestow.

After mature deliberation, I decided that the county town of S— should be the field of my future operations, or rather, that I would commence there the brilliant career that would, as a matter of course, extend itself over the country.

Accordingly, I hired an office on one of the principal streets of that highly favoured town, spending nearly all my available means in fitting it up in a style suitable to the dignity of its occupant.

Then I sat down and waited for the clients that I felt were sure to come.

In order that no one might be ignorant of my whereabouts, I had my name and business placed in very conspicuous lettering upon the entrance to the main building, also upon my office door.

How nicely it looked!—"Augustus Snodgrass, Attorney at Law."

I regarded it with looks of fond admiration as I passed in and out, which was pretty often, not having much else to do; but no one else gave it more than a stare of curiosity, and worse than all, no one seemed to take into practical consideration what it was placed there for.

I had letters of introduction to some of the principal lawyers, but far from hailing with delight this important addition to their number, they appeared to regard me as a sort of interloper, whom it was their duty to frown down.

The elder lawyers snubbed me on account of my youth, and the younger ones looked with jealous disfavour upon an intrusion that was likely to make their scanty allowance of clients still more scanty.

It was clearly the opinion of the legal fraternity of S—, expressed in various ways, that there were more than sufficient lawyers to go round already, but the budding hopes of my young ambition were not so easily blighted. I remembered the words of the immortal D. W., that, however crowded it might be below, "there was always room above," being of the opinion that having been there he ought to know.

I was determined to get "above," if earnest effort and patient waiting could effect it.

How much harder the latter is than the former, I had ample opportunity to learn.

Twice the court had been in session, and it was now near the close of the third term, and though I had been in close attendance every day, it was as a spectator only. Not one of all the many cases tried had been assigned me, nor did any of the various contestants manifest the slightest disposition to appropriate individually the vast stores of legal knowledge I had laid up for the benefit of such.

This state of things was not only mortifying,

but very discouraging. I was already in arrears for my rent, while the small fund that I had reserved for my bare living expenses, reduced to the lowest terms, was nearly gone.

One day, as I ascended the court steps, a lady in front of me dropped her glove. As I picked it up and handed it to her she flashed around upon me a smile so sweet and radiant that it fell like sunshine upon a heart that saw little sunshine elsewhere.

That day ended very much like all the others, and I again returned to my solitary office; so irritated by the provoking gloss of newness that everything wore, that a strong impulse came over me to upset the inkstand on the speckless desk, kick over the table, drag the chairs about the room—anything to get rid of it.

But the reflection that I might have to dispose of them for what they would bring turned my pent-up energies and destructive spirit in another and more quiet direction.

Having finished my frugal supper of crackers and cheese, washed down by copious draughts of the clear, sparkling ale drunk by our first parents, I seated myself by the open window, which fronted the street, to enjoy the cool evening breeze. Just across the way was the office of a brother lawyer not far from my own age, whom I had often seen in court, bustling about, full of business and importance.

As I watched the people pass in and out, musing in a very discontented mood, I'm afraid, on the unequal way with which this world's goods are distributed, I saw the same lady enter that I had met in the morning on the court steps. I could not see her face, but I knew her by the turn of the head and peculiarly graceful carriage.

She came out almost immediately, and pausing upon the sidewalk, glanced up and down the street with an air of doubt and perplexity. As she caught sight of me her face brightened into what almost seemed a smile of recognition, and across the street she came as rapidly as a pair of neat number-four boots could bring her.

Was she coming here? She certainly was; and I had scarcely time to fling the paper in my hand into the farther corner of the room and take my seat at the desk when she entered.

The rosy cheeks looked still rosier from the exertion of mounting the stairs and the evident excitement under which she was labouring, and as she looked at me from the dark depths of a pair of bewildering bright eyes, I thought that I had never beheld a lovelier or sweeter face.

"You are a lawyer, I believe?" she said, as she seated herself in the chair I placed for her.

"Yes, madame; and very much at your service."

"I'm so glad that I happened to see you at the window. You see I want a lawyer. I saw you in the court this morning, and I—I liked your looks."

This assurance was very flattering, coming from such pretty lips, and my eyes returned the compliment, if my tongue was silent.

"I thought I should never find you, though," laughed my visitor, speaking very much as if she had known me all my life. "You see I didn't know your name; and though I described you to several, no one could tell me who or where you were."

I did not share in the evident surprise of my client—in prospective—intimating that I had not been in town any great length of time.

"That accounts for it," said my visitor, tracing a figure in the carpet with her parasol, and looking as though she hardly knew how to open her business.

"Ahem! You came to consult me professionally, I presume?"

"Yes. The fact is, Mr. Snodgrass, I've been treated shamefully by a certain person, and if there's any law in the land, I mean he shall suffer for it."

This was spoken with a sudden energy of look and tone that was almost startling.

"Proceed, madame; I will give you the best aid in my power, only you must tell me everything just as it is."

"Of course, that is what I came for," said my fair client, who was a practical little body, as I was not long in finding out. "You know old Dr. Brown, of S—? No? I thought everybody knew him. Well, he's the richest man in the county, and the proudest, too. He has a son Charlie; real handsome and nice. At least I used to think him so; I hate him now, and you won't wonder when you hear. He's been courting with me more than a year, vowing all the time that he loved me with distraction—I've got it in black and white, too! And now he has broken with me, just to please his father, who wants him to marry a rich girl!"

Here the speaker paused, though evidently more for want of breath than words, during which I did not hesitate to express my belief that any man that would treat her thus was a villain, for whom hanging was too good.

Considerably to my surprise—I was little versed in the ways of women—the fire in those flashing eyes was suddenly quenched in tears.

"It's all his father's fault!" she sobbed. "Charlie loved me; I'm sure of it. And I loved him, too, dearly! But I don't now—not the least particle! And I mean to make him suffer for treating me so, too! And so," she added, wiping her eyes, and speaking in quite another tone and manner, "I want you to sue him right away, and make it cost him all you can."

I was no way disinclined to do this, as the reader will readily infer.

"You have letters, you say?"

"Oceans of 'em," responded my client, taking from her pocket a thick package of letters and placing it on my desk. "I brought you a few."

"One thing I forgot to tell you," she said, at the conclusion of our interview, turning back from the door: "I haven't got any money. But if you'll get my case, I shall have the ability to pay you for your trouble, and will give you whatever you ask."

This was the first of many pleasant interviews with Miss Nettie Drake, each succeeding one being, to me, pleasanter than the last. And as interested as I was in this, my first case, I grew daily more and more interested in my pretty client, until, at last, the day before the suit opened in which we both had so much at stake, I told her plainly that I would accept nothing else for my fee than her sweet and lovely self.

Miss Nettie was nothing loth, though the reason she gave for assenting was hardly so satisfactory as it might be.

"I like you very much," was her frank response. "I liked you the first time I saw you—because you look so much like Charlie."

This did not accord very well with the undying hatred she avowed, as I had occasion to note afterwards.

A suit like this is always attended with more or less interest, and the wealth and standing of the family of the defendant made the case I was conducting a matter of much public gossip and comment, and on the day of the trial the court was crowded to its utmost capacity, people coming from far and near to attend it.

Though full of inward exultation I maintained an outward dignity and gravity befitting the importance of the work that was before me. The defendant was not present until near the close of the trial, but I took good care that the plaintiff was, and that she was seated where her youth, beauty and grace would tell upon the minds of the jury.

The defendant was represented by two of the ablest lawyers, a score of years my senior, and who evidently looked with something akin to contempt upon my youth and inexperience. But I felt pretty sure of winning; the letters of the defendant were very conclusive, being expressive of the most ardent affection, and I was confident that I should carry the sympathies of the jury.

With the stimulus of both love and ambition,

I flatter myself I made a most eloquent plea. At all events, it was a very effective one, the jury giving a verdict in favour of the plaintiff without leaving their seats, awarding her damages to the tune of one thousand pounds.

Miss Nettie received this very differently from what I had anticipated. She gave me a reproachful look as, flushed with triumph, I turned towards her.

"Of course, I'm glad we've won," she said, as I tendered her my congratulations. "But you were too hard on Charlie, poor fellow! He isn't half so bad as you made him out."

This was hardly what I had expected or deserved; but I had no time to ponder on it amid the stream of congratulations which poured in upon me from every side. Among those who accosted me was an odd-looking old man, with strongly-marked features and iron-grey hair.

"Allow me to congratulate you, sir," he said, grasping my hand. "My name is Brown—Dr. Brown; I presume you've heard of me. I like your grit, and the girl's, too. It's likely to cost my son something in the end, but he can stand. If not, why, I must help him out. What I wanted to say to you is that I have some law business that I would like to have you take hold of. If you are going to your office I'll go with you, and tell you about it."

I was about to pass out of the court with my new acquaintance when I suddenly bethought myself of Miss Nettie, who might need my escort.

When I last observed her she was in earnest converse with a young man about my own age. She was now nowhere to be seen.

As we—Dr. Brown and I—passed down the steps I saw her just ahead of me, in company with the above-mentioned young man, but my mind was so busy and excited with the bright prospects that had dawned upon me that I gave little thought to it.

I was very busy during the remainder of the term; and though my mind often reverted to my beautiful betrothed, as I considered her to be, I had no time for anything more, Miss Nettie having returned to her home, in S—, an adjoining town about eight miles distant.

One evening, near its close, as I was exulting at the thought that I would soon be able to claim in person the charming fee that had been promised me, and which I felt I had richly earned, I received the following letter:

"AUGUSTUS SNODGRASS, ESQ. "DEAR SIR,—Please accept the endorsed proof of my appreciation of the services you rendered the lady who is now my wife. Mrs. B. joins me in many wishes for your health and prosperity."

"CHARLES BROWN."

The enclosed cheque for one thousand pounds did much to soothe the wound inflicted on my vanity, rather than heart; and when, a few months later, I met a young sister of Mrs. Brown's, the cure was complete.

This charming lady is now Mrs. Augustus Snodgrass; and happy in her love, and in the tide of business that is now flowing in upon me, I have ample reason to bless the appearance of "My First Client."

M. G. H.

IMPORTANT USE OF NATURAL GAS.

THE petroleum product of Pennsylvania now reaches the fabulous sum of sixteen millions of pounds sterling, while the exportation runs to about twelve millions. Until recently, or at least within a few years, but little use has been made of the natural gas which has discharged into either the open air or been burned in huge torch lights through the oil regions. In Beaver Falls, a manufacturing town of considerable note, located about thirty miles west of Pittsburgh on the Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad, one well was put down about sixteen years ago for oil, and struck gas at about 1,100 feet in depth, whence it poured continuously until about two years ago, when it was leased, cased up, and brought into use. This

induced the Harmony Society to put down more wells in different localities (five in number), all of which give out liberal supplies, some as high as one hundred thousand feet every twenty-four hours, which is now being used in nearly every manufacturing establishment in the town.

About one half of the gas used for lighting the town comes from these wells; it is also used under the gas retorts for heating (five in number). The large cutlery works use it in 49 heating furnaces; the hinge works, in three large heating furnaces; the pottery works, in two large kilns and two very large furnaces for drying ware; the shovel works, in one large heating furnace; the file works, in seven large annealing furnaces; the saw works, in one very large heating furnace, fourteen feet long by eleven and a half feet wide, which is run to a very high heat. It is also used in one forging furnace. Two drying kilns for seasoning lumber use it. And it is also introduced into dwelling houses, heating furnaces, and stoves and cooking stoves, and is exclusively used direct from the wells for lighting one large dwelling.

Other wells are now going down, and everything indicates the exclusive use of this gas for all heating, illuminating, and manufacturing purposes. Its value is really incalculable in working steel. It is said to be fully equal to charcoal, if not superior, there being no base substance like sulphur or other matters so damaging to its quality. A remarkable feature about it is, that men work right along in a room filled with it, take it freely into their lungs, in short, breathe it as they do air; and it appears rather healthful than otherwise, while manufactured gas is actually dangerous to inhale. The flame is clear white and gives an intense heat with very little smoke.

There seems no diminution in the supply; there may be a limit to the supply, but the gas is in all probability being constantly produced down deep in the earth.

MELISSA'S IMAGINATION.

MELISSA NORTON would brag. She couldn't help it. The less she had to boast about the more she boasted. It was a hard task, too, in a place where people knew her and all about her. Certainly, nothing bad was known, for Melissa was a nice girl enough, who had for her parents old Peter Norton, who split wood for anyone who wanted wood split, and also saw it when necessary, and Ann Bunting, who had not disdained to "do up" fine linen.

Late in life the two resolved to marry, and Melissa was their daughter. Good, plain old Methodists were those parents of hers. Though, to be sure, old Peter's fish and bear stories were wonderful, and he had seen both sea serpents and mermaids in his young days when, as he said, he "shipped afore the mast."

And when they died Melissa lost loving parents, who had had her taught dressmaking, and had made sure that she could read, write, and cipher. And the good words on the little stone slab over their grave were not undeserved.

After their death Melissa earned her living at her trade, and soon she felt that distance lent enchantment to the view, and began to speak of the small wooden house where she had lived as her "late pa's elegant residence," and of the little cart and donkey as "the carriage and horses."

As she fitted the waists of Mrs. A. B. and C., or flounced the skirts of Miss X. Y. and Z., who were new residents, she sometimes mentioned that she had not expected to come to this when her own dressmaker came four times a year to the house.

From this she went on farther, being quite sure of an audience of strangers; she spoke of maid and her "boudoir"—the latter an apartment often mentioned in the books she took from the circulating library.

The "boudoir" had been in the garret, and at one end it was possible to stand at the full height of five feet one; but from the storehouse

of her imagination Melissa furnished it in blue satin and silver, with Turkish rugs and lace bed curtains.

"There allers was," Melissa would wind up, "a marble statoo of a Cupid a-standing in the corner, and a little fountain on the mantle-tree that played cologne-water perpetooal."

Sometimes people believed this picture of luxury to be drawn from life; often they knew the truth.

Tom Gibbs knew the truth very well, and yet he liked Melissa. She was handy and good-natured. She never could be cross if she tried. She could make any masculine garment as well as any tailor.

She was neat, rather pretty, her hair shone, and her hands were plump and white. He intended to marry her. He walked out with her evenings, courted her Sundays, and listened to her wonderful stories as though they were fairy tales.

Now and then he would utter a faint protest of:

"Melissy, ain't you drawed a little on your imagination?"

And sometimes she would answer, quite calmly:

"I dunno but I hev."

But they never quarrelled. How Melissa spoke of him poor Tom Gibbs never knew. She represented him to listening customers and sympathetic friends as being "wild" about her. She told how he sank upon his knees and cried out:

"Melissa, hear me! I swear that if you scorn me I will cease to live!"

She mentioned the fact that he had brought a pair of pistols with him, and had put them to his temples, and that she had cried out:

"Forbear, Thomas! I yield! My heart is thine!"

The real facts of that offer were these: Tom had said:

"Lissey, don't you calculate we'd make a pair?"

And Melissa had said: "Perhaps we would."

Then Tom had replied:

"Then it's done," and had kissed her; but Melissa drew on her imagination.

She represented her lover as playing on a guitar and serenading her, as writing poems to her, as having received offers of marriage from all the rich young ladies in town, but replying:

"No, Madame Melissa Norton has my heart—none other."

And she went so far as to declare that the squire's daughter had brought chests of gold out of her father's cellar, and had said:

"Wed me, and they are yours."

When her auditors saw Tom Gibbs, who was a very honest young carpenter, with red hair and freckles, a pug nose and sloping shoulders, they sometimes wondered at the infatuation of the ladies of the place. But poor Tom had no idea of what was said of him by his imaginative betrothed.

So with Tom's presents. When he gave Melissa a pair of jet bracelets, she spoke of them as "pearls;" and when he bought a hair-pin, with something like a glass onion with a gilt knob on the end of it, she alluded to it as a "diamond spray;"—the Lady Elvira, in the last volume, having been given to the wearing of such ornaments.

There was always a slight foundation for poor Melissa's airy structures. For instance, if poor Peter Norton had never gone before the mast in a whaling vessel, Melissa would never have spoken of him as a Commodore, as she now did regularly.

In the principal street of the town wherein Melissa plied her needle was a jeweller's shop. In the window of that shop were displayed many attractive articles of jewellery. Amongst them for a long time hung a certain delicate lady's watch, blue enamelled and dainty, and suspended to a fairy chain. This watch was not for sale.

It was the property of Miss Pendleton, the "squire's daughter," who, according to Melissa's account, had brought the chests of gold from

her father's cellar to tempt Tom to become her suitor. The actual fact was a small, brass-bound box, which she desired to have repaired, but which was work too delicate for Tom's hand.

The watch was out of order, and the slow-going old jeweller in vain endeavoured to discover the reason. There it hung; every evening he took it down, looked at it, poked it, and hung it up again. It still gained time. When Melissa and Tom went out walking they sometimes looked in at the window. Melissa thought the watch was for sale, and she sometimes said to Tom:

"If we were rich people, you'd give me that watch, wouldn't you, Tom?"

Tom always answered:

"You should have the whole windy full, Melissy."

One evening, after this had been said very often, Tom, who sometimes became mildly jocular, stopped at the candy and toy shop, and after purchasing half a pound of peppermint drops invested one penny in a pewter toy watch.

"There," he said to Melissa, "don't never say I don't give you no watches."

Melissa laughed over the joke; but she received upon her imaginative mind the impression of a splendid present, and the next day told Mrs. Pritchard, for whom she was making a cloak, that Tom had given her a watch.

"He must make a good deal at his trade," said old Mrs. Pritchard.

"He does," said Melissa.

A little later she went home arm in arm with Susan Snip, who had been sewing with her at Mrs. Pritchard's.

Susan, who had been overwhelmed by the thought of the grandeur of Melissa's last present, glanced at the jeweller's window as she went along; so did Melissa. She saw that the watch she so admired was gone. A thought struck her.

"Susan," said she, "do you remember that tiny blue watch that used to hang there?"

"Yes," said Susan.

"That is the one that Tom gave me," said Melissa.

"Oh, my!" cried the girl, "let me see it."

"Some day soon, Susan," said Melissa. "It is all wrapped up in cotton now, and put away."

Then she bade Susan good night, and ran into her own door. An hour after this a man knocked at the same door, and asked for Melissa Norton. It was a local policeman.

"Don't make a fuss about it," he said, confidentially, "but you are under arrest, Miss Norton."

"What for?" cried Melissa.

"You'll find out soon enough," said the man.

In the office of the Justice of the Peace Melissa found Tom Gibbs, also under arrest, furious with honest wrath.

There also was the jeweller; and now Melissa learnt the truth.

The evening before, as the old gentleman was alone in his shop examining the watch, someone had suddenly thrown snuff in his eyes and taken it away.

By the time help came, the man was not to be seen. Search was made everywhere, but no one in particular was suspected until Susan had repeated Melissa's story.

Tom, who had only an ordinary carpenter's trade, had already been suspected of extravagance, in that he had given "pearl" bracelets and diamond sprays to Melissa. Now people cried out that they understood it all. If he had given a watch to Melissa—yes, that very watch—there was no doubt that he had stolen it.

Poor Melissa! she was not allowed to speak to Tom. They were locked up for the night, far from each other, and how Melissa cried.

The next morning they met again in the court amidst a crowd of strangers. The jeweller charged Tom with the theft of the watch—on Susan's testimony that Melissa had said that it had been presented to her by her lover.

And Melissa was now called forward; the room swam before her; she was aware of a crowd of faces, of a stout man looking into her eyes, of other men waiting for her words. Somebody said to her, amidst what sounded like the ringing of fog-bells:

"Miss Norton, did you know that Thomas Gibbs had stolen that watch when he gave it to you?"

"Tom never stole anything—never in all his life," faltered Melissa.

"But he gave you a watch?"

"Yes," said Melissa.

"The blue enamelled watch that hung in Mr. —'s window—you recognised it?"

"No," said Melissa, "not that watch."

"One like it?"

"Some," stammered Melissa.

"Oh, Melissa!" faltered Tom.

"I can swear it wasn't that one," said Melissa.

"You said it was," piped Susan.

"Can you produce the watch?" inquired the voices amid the fog-bells.

Melissa fumbled in her pocket. It was a dreadful moment, but the thing must be done. She put the pewter watch into somebody's hand, and felt the world slide from under her.

When she recovered she was no longer in court, and poor Tom knelt beside her and held her miserably cold little hand. The jeweller was apologetically sprinkling cold water on her best dress, and Susan was sobbing reproachfully. In this interval the real thief had been arrested with the watch in his possession, and Tom Gibbs's character was cleared.

"Oh, Tom, Tom," sobbed Melissa, "I suppose you hate me!"

"No, Melissy," said Tom. "I've felt pretty bad, but it's over; pretty mad also, but that is over, too. Only, Melissy, that time you drawed very heavy on your imagination, and it come near being serious."

"Yes, Tom," said Melissa; "but I've done now. I've had my lesson."

She spoke the truth. Melissa—now Melissa Gibbs—never drew on her imagination as to facts again. M. K. D.

FACETIE.

THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

(Scene: A Back Slum, Sunday Morning.)

BILL: "'Ulo, 'Arry, it ain't proper to have yer 'ands in yer pockets to-day."

ARRY: "Oh, ain't it? Well, I've got mine in other people's all the week, so I can afford to have 'em in my own on Sundays." —Fun.

VERY BAD STATE OF THINGS INDEED.

FIRST BUTCHER'S BOY (log): "I say, Bill, how's the old pony gettin' on?"

SECOND DITTO: "Oh, he's gettin' verry stiff; he can't do a mile in less than five minutes now, and he doesn't make the people at the crossin's run like he used; why, he's never run over any one for nearly six months!"

FIRST BOY (with great animation): "By juv, you'll have to have a change, then!" —Fun.

SEASONABLE.

SEAFARING PERSON (rushing to 'Little Todger, who has just proposed, and is waiting for her answer): "Was you the gent, sir, as the steward said was took bad?" —Judy.

CHAMBERLAIN'S NURSERY RHYME.

To Cabul, to Cabul, proposals to make,
Back again, back again, bad news to take;

To Cabul, to Cabul, lances, sword and gun,
Back again, never, till Cabul is won.

—Fun.

BY AN OLD TURTLE.

"A Mayor's nest."—His Lordship's bedroom at the Mansion House! —Judy.

HE WAS FETCHED.

A NEGRO appeared before a magistrate charged with some trivial offence. The latter said to the man:

"You can go now, Sambo, but let me warn you never to appear here again."

Sambo replied with a broad grin:

"I wouldn't been here dis time only the constable fetch me."

GRASS OR HAY.

"All flesh is grass," remarked a dry preacher in the midst of his wearisome discourse.

"Then I guess you're hay," half audibly observed a sleepy fellow in one of the wall pews.

BAKE HER.

A BAKER having stolen a goose, the owner cried after him:

"Baker, Baker."

"I will, I will!" shouted he.

Being afterwards brought before a magistrate, charged with the offence, he defended himself by assuring the court that he merely took it up to try its weight, when the prosecutor suddenly told him to "bake her," which he did; but finding he did not come for it, rather than let it spoil, of course he ate it himself.

CLEARING HIM OUT.

A YOUNG gentleman lately said to a little urchin who sat loitering about his premises without invitation:

"Young man, clear out, begone, slope, march, disfranchise yourself, evacuate, disperse, disgorge, cut, be off."

At which the boy, suspecting his meaning, said:

"If you don't want me here, why don't you tell me to go home, and be done with it?"

EVERYONE can appreciate the feelings of the little boy who on one intensely hot day ran to his mother and exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, mamma, I'm leaking all over!"

SAUCE OR IMPUDENCE?

A CHAF from the country, dining one day at a city friend's who ranked among the most fashionable of the "upper ten," desired a little more sauce on his pudding.

Thinking this word too common or vulgar, for such a place and occasion, he astonished the presiding goddess of the table by gentileising it thus:

"If you please, marm, I will trouble you for a spoonful or two more of your impudence."

GOOD EVIDENCE.

A MAN WAS brought before a country squire for stealing a hog, and three witnesses being examined swore they saw him steal it. A wag having volunteered as counsel for Josh, knowing the scope of the squire's brain, arose and addressed him as follows:

"May it please your honour, I can establish this man's honesty beyond the shadow of a doubt, for I have twelve witnesses ready to swear that they did not see him steal it."

The squire rested his head for a few moments upon his hand, as if in deep thought, and with great dignity arose and brushing back his hair, said:

"If there are twelve who did not see him steal it, and only three who did, I discharge the prisoner."

THE Motto of Shere Ali—"I Am'er."

—Funny Folks.

Post-Mortems—Dead letters.

—Funny Folks.

STATISTICS.

HYMN-BOOKS IN USE IN THE LONDON CHURCHES.—The following figures, showing the hymn-books in use in 1878 in the London churches are taken from the new edition of Mackeson's "Guide:" Hymns, A. and M., 408; S. P. C. K., 191; Bickersteth, 106; Mercer, 40; Kemble, 15; Windle, 12; Hall, 7; People's 7;

Hymnary, 5; Noted, 4; Barry, 4; Harland's, 1; Grace and Glory, 5; Irish Church, 2; Mitre, 2; Tate and Brady, 1; Spical Hymns, 23; Not reported, 32; Total, 864.

SHAREHOLDERS IN THE CITY OF GLASGOW BANK.—The following is an analysis of the list of shareholders in this Bank: Ladies, 323; gentlemen, 881; shareholders holding the amount of stock qualifying them to be directors, 185; bankers, 16; bank officials, 43; solicitors and advocates, 35; ministers, 43; widows, 34; teachers, 7; papermakers, 9; manufacturers, 19; merchants, 82; tradesmen, 82; medical practitioners, 22; insurance agents, factors, &c., 47; farmers, 24; executors, 78; trustees, 37; gentlemen whose profession is not stated, 335. There are 267 resident in Glasgow, 103 in Edinburgh, 78 in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, 42 in Fifeshire, 27 in Inverness and the North, 21 in Crieff and Comrie, 18 in Helensborough, 12 in Stirling and its neighbourhood, 9 in Ayr, 8 in Elgin, 6 in Dundee, 3 in Perth, while the rest are scattered over the southern counties and in the towns in the West; few reside out of Scotland.

THE FULNESS OF LIFE.

THE oak that through a thousand years

Hath passed from vigour to decay—

How vast its rounded life appears

To creatures of a briefer day.

And still the transient flower that lies

Amid the grasses at its root,

And in a single summer dies—

Hath this not known life's perfect fruit?

He reckons false who measures life

By lapse of years alone, and calls

This "fulness:" All the brunt of strife

Is often his who early falls!

Life is not made of years: it grows

From buds of hope to blooms of grace

More swiftly, sometimes, than the rose

That bourgeons in your garden space.

Its fulness is its perfect show;

And this hath, haply, come to fruit

With some dear life we each may know

Long ere the winter touched its root!

So you, who mourn a soul set free

Before what you may deem its prime,

Take heart! God knows, and only He,

His harvest and His summer-time.

C. D. G.

GEMS.

SOMETHING FOR BOTH SIDES.

"How we are admired!" said the waters of a rushing cascade to the rocks over which they fell, as many standers-by exclaimed at their beauty.

"Whom do you mean by we?" asked the rocks.

"Whom? why, we waters, of course," was the reply.

"Are you so foolish and vain?" asked the rocks, frowning. "Can you not see that they who behold tremble before us. You are merely a feature in the scene."

"Hah! hah! hah!" shouted the waters, and rushed on, echoing the laugh from point to point.

"Do you really think your rugged faces would charm anyone unless adorned with our brilliancy?"

"Depart!" said the rocks, with terrible frown, "and leave us to stand alone; then we shall know to whom beauty and glory belong."

"Let us leave them now, and flow over yonder mead," said the waters. They did so, and the rocks were silent, and so was the flood of the fields. None came to gaze or listen.

"Ah!" murmured the waters, "we should not

have refused the rocks their share of honour. Truly they made us a thing of beauty."

"Brothers," said the rocks in hoarse echoes, "why did we drive away the waters? If we lent them our strength or form, they clothe us with their grace and splendour. Now, alas! they flow on in obscurity, and we are passed by unheeded and unpraised."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LAYER JELLY CAKE.—One tablespoonful of butter, two cups of sugar, two eggs, one teacupful of milk, one teaspoonful of soda, two teaspoonfuls of cream tartar, three and one-half cups of flour. This receipt makes four layers; spread jelly between layer.

HERMIT CAKES.—One cup of butter, one and one-half cups of sugar, one cup of stoned raisins or currants, three eggs, one teaspoonful of soda dissolved in a little milk, one teaspoonful of all kinds of spice, flour enough to roll in a sheet. Beat the eggs, sugar, and butter together, then add the other ingredients. Roll it to the thickness of one-third of an inch, and cut by the cover of the dredging-box, or a cake-cutter. These will keep well—are better a fortnight old than when first made. Bake in a quick oven.

DELICIOUS LIGHT TEA BISCUIT.—Two quarts of best sifted flour, one pint of sweet milk, in which melt one quarter of a pound of sweet butter, one teaspoonful of salt in the milk, one teacup of fresh yeast. Make a hole in the centre, pour in the yeast (well shaken), stir diligently with a fork. Let the milk, &c., be just blood-warm (no more), then knead as bread. Cut it across, through and through with a knife. Let it rise six or seven hours, as it may require. Take from the pan, knead it well, cut in small cakes, and put to rise in pan an hour or more before baking. The receipt, with additional sugar and suitable spices, makes excellent family doughnuts.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE fourth recorded ascent of Cotopaxi was made in January last, by Herr Von Theilmann, a German traveller.

MODERATE activity is best for every healthy person in hot weather. The man who lounges about and thinks of nothing but the heat suffers more than anybody else.

NOVEL PASSAGE OF THE CHANNEL.—An American named Fowler, who resides at Bordeaux, has crossed the Channel in a canoe of his own invention, which he terms a "podascope." It is made of india-rubber, and folds up to the size of a carpet-bag. When inflated it forms a twin canoe, and the propeller stands with one foot on each portion. Mr. Fowler left Boulogne Harbour at 4 A.M. for Dover, but the currents carried him to Sandgate, where he landed at 3.55 P.M., having done the journey in less than twelve hours. He was accompanied by a boat, in which was a representative of the French Press. On landing he was received by a large crowd, his strange craft having excited much curiosity. He was considerably fatigued with his journey, but soon recovered, and took up his quarters at the Kent Hotel.

THERE can be no doubt concerning the absurd extent to which red has been employed by milliners and dressmakers this year. Whole costumes of the flaring colour have been worn at the seaside, and quiet people have been shocked and scandalised by the apparitions of ladies thus attired. I saw a good downright "flarer" of a costume a day or two ago in London. It was a tight-fitting dress, called a "fishwife," we believe, red and yellow stripes; the tout ensemble, completed by a red bonnet, was conspicuous enough to require a strong-minded man to venture as an escort to the wearer. The dress, however, was in perfect taste.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GRONER.—Very likely, but we are without any authoritative information on the subject.

S. C. J.—We make no charge for the insertion of matrimonial advertisements on this page.

ROSE.—Your handwriting is good, and with practice would be excellent.

M.—The marks of the wounds described by you generally last as long as life.

LACRUM.—Use a little lavender water twice a day, and continue the cold water morning bath. You write very well.

S. S.—Our advice to you is to set to work to cultivate your conscience, and then act in accordance with its dictates.

C. W.—It is unnecessary to send any stamps, because any service rendered to correspondents is gratis as far as they are concerned.

W.—If your brother presents himself at George Street, Westminster, the enlisting sergeants there will satisfy him on the point.

FANST.—The young man is so irregular in his attentions and seems so indifferent we think you had better drop him.

T. F.—We should advise you to go and see the young lady and her father. What is a journey of three hundred miles compared to getting a good wife?

BEW.—All you can do is to keep trying. Look over the advertisements for teachers in the daily papers, and follow them up.

ORPHEUS.—We do not know of any such schools, and it is very doubtful whether you would find yourself any happier as an actress than you are now.

LIZZIE W.—A girl should certainly be advised not to marry a man old enough to be her father, and it is perhaps proper to tell her that the first letter of a Christian name should be a capital letter.

ERNEST.—Your letter is legibly written. In it there are two words incorrectly spelt. The other question can only be answered by a surgeon who has an opportunity of seeing the case.

SARAH R.—You must wait for the chance of making acquaintances in the usual way. It is not worth while for you to go in search of a young man, or to employ a town-crier with his bell to ring for one.

MAR.—It would be far better to wait till he asks permission to call. Do your parents know that you are corresponding with him? If not you should let them know at once.

JAMIE.—You may venture to speak first yourself, and take the chance of her recognising you. If this difficulty is made up, and you must quarrel again, quarrel with some enemy, and not with your best friend.

K. P.—You should hear any reasons that your parents may urge in behalf of their views, and treat them with due consideration; but in making your final decision you should follow the dictates of your own heart and judgment.

CARRIE.—He probably likes you, but has not the courage to come after you to go to church, although he finds it easy enough to accompany you home. Treat him considerately, and his courage will doubtless grow so rapidly that he will soon be able to ask the privilege of walking to church with you.

EDWARD.—You would find histories, biographies, and travels both interesting and instructive. Study any elementary grammar and practice writing daily. You will improve rapidly. The embarrassment you feel will wear off as you grow older and become more accustomed to society.

BOB.—You have equal rights in the matter, but such questions are not determined by rights. They are settled by custom and courtesy and gallantry. If the young lady does not wish you to address her by her first name in company or public you should not do so. Should you dislike to have her address you by your first name, and let her know it, the chances are that she would never so address you again, unless you become her accepted over.

A time usually arrives when young people who have been intimate from childhood cease to address one another by their given names, and adopt the formality and usage of society as to such matters.

BOB AND NED, two sailors in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Bob is twenty-two, dark. Ned is twenty-one, fair. Respondents must be about twenty.

M. S. twenty-four, dark, handsome, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age. Must be fond of home.

L. H. and D. T. two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. L. H. is twenty-two, of medium height, fair, loving. D. T. is twenty, tall, dark, good-looking.

V. E. twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman. Must be about twenty-five, dark, fond of home, and blue eyes.

IVANHOE, twenty-four, tall, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty, fond of home.

N. L. and E. G. two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. N. L. is nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music, of a loving disposition. E. G. is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

JACK, twenty, blue eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-three with a view to matrimony.

CLARE, twenty-four, fond of home and children, loving, golden hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-eight, dark hair, brown eyes, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and children.

LILLIE, seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman loving and fond of home.

MODESTY.

BEHOLD you modest maiden,
How beautiful is she!
How fair and sweet her countenance!
'Tis lovely eyes to see.

Her cheek is dyed like crimson rose,
Her cheeks are eye serene;
Her smiles are like the sun's bright rays
As in summer-time they're seen.

And so retiring are her ways—
How simple her attire;
She's cautious ne'er to give offence,
But would rather love inspire.

And her voice is gentleness itself,
'Tis soothing eye to hear;
'Tis never heard in angry words,
Or grating on one's ear.

She's loved around by young and old,
They bless her from afar;
Her heart is thoughtful of their wants,
She e'en knows what they are.

She's never forward in her speech,
Her opinion you must ask;
She ne'er frequents the haunts of men,
Or 'neath their smiles would bask.

Oh! what's so sweet as modesty
As seen in maiden fair?
No wanton glances of the eye
Are cast round here and there.

To catch some heart to play with
To cheer the weary hour,
Coquetting full of thoughtlessness,
Yet happy in her power.

No; modesty despiseth such;
'Tis more like gowan fair,
Content to bloom within some shade
And always happy there.

S. B. N.

M. V. and M. R. two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. M. V. is twenty-one, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, good-tempered. M. R. is seventeen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

D. H. C. twenty, light brown hair, blue eyes, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, tall, fond of home and children.

B. F., H. D., and E. W. three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies. B. F. is nineteen, light hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition. H. D. is twenty-one, dark, medium height, fond of home. E. W. is nineteen, brown hair, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Respondents must be about nineteen, of loving dispositions.

M. D. G. and Y. X. K. two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. M. D. G. is nineteen, of a loving disposition, tall. Y. X. K. is twenty, dark, black eyes, medium height.

D. C. twenty-two, dark blue eyes, fair, tall, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-five, dark hair and eyes.

J. B. twenty-two, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-five, good-looking, medium height, fond of home.

LOUIE and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Louie is nineteen, dark hair, grey eyes, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home and children. Annie is twenty-two, medium height, good-looking, dark, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home. Respondents must be about the same age, good-looking.

FLEUR-DE-LIS, seventeen, tall, dark hair and eyes, dark, good-tempered, wishes to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

H. G. twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be loving.

FLORENCE, twenty-three, brown hair, hazel eyes, tall, domesticated, good-tempered, fond of music, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty-four, fond of home, fair, loving.

B. T. and B. N. two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. B. T. is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home. B. N. is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes, and very fond of music.

STELLA, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a tall young gentleman.

ASMODEUS, twenty, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

NELLIE and MABEL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Nellie is very fond of home, golden hair, blue eyes. Mabel is of medium height, dark hair, blue eyes.

LUCY, fair, good-looking, tall, would like to correspond with a tall young man.

COOK TO-MORROW, OWES A BASIN, and GIVE ME A CALL, three seamen, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Cook To-morrow is twenty-one, light brown hair, hazel eyes. Owes A Basin is twenty-two, brown hair, dark eyes. Give Me A Call is twenty-three, auburn hair, blue eyes, loving. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-one.

C. K. and Y. B. two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. C. K. is seventeen, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes. Y. B. is eighteen, fair, blue eyes, medium height, good-looking, and fond of society.

MABEL and ETHEL, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Mabel is fair, of a loving disposition. Ethel is seventeen, dark, fond of music. Must be between twenty-five and twenty-eight, good-looking, and fair.

BREAD BAG, FIRING KEG, and DIRECTOR, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Bread Bag is twenty, early hair. Firing Keg is twenty-three, fair, dark hair. Director is twenty-six, handsome, light hair, grey eyes. They are seamen in the Royal Navy.

JANIE and CARRIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Janie is fair, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home. Carrie is seventeen, dark, good-looking, and of a loving disposition.

MARIE, nineteen, thoroughly domesticated, loving, tall, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be about twenty-one.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

B. G. is responded to by—Marie, eighteen, dark, fond of home and children.

N. G. by—Polly, eighteen, medium height.

H. B. by—Lottie, seventeen, fair.

H. L. by—F. M.

POLLY by—Jimmy, twenty-two, dark hair and eyes.

DEBRA by—H. M.

TILLY by—A. A.

CHARLIE by—Edith, twenty, medium height, light hair, dark eyes.

DICK by—Lassie, twenty-one, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

H. B. by—Fanny, twenty.

HARRY by—Emilie, nineteen, domesticated, of medium height, fair.

A. C. E. by—N. B.

G. C. by—J. W., twenty-one, fair, brown hair, medium height, loving.

MARY ANTOINETTE by—E. D., twenty-four, good-looking, medium height, fair.

TILLY by—J. W.

H. B. by—L. A. H., nineteen, brown hair and eyes, of medium height, good-looking, fond of music.

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